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PEACE PELICAN, SPINSTER.

A Love Story.

BY

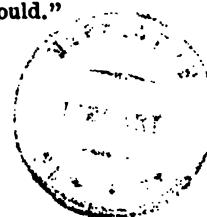
CHRISTABEL GOLDSMITH.

*Pseud. of
Fannie N. Smith.*

“Might, could, would or should.”

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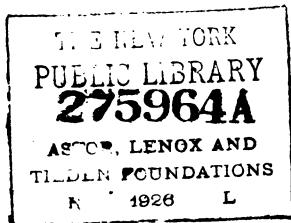
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THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

My tale has been an honest one; and an old one, too; lived daily about your own doors, among your acquaintance and charities. You can see Joe and Christie and Knox any day in the week. Not every one is acquainted with Doppy and Amos and Hugh. But they are alive everywhere for the knowing. And so are the Pelicans and Allwoods—and Francis Haythorne.

I have tried to be fair to Charley Pelican; but I don't like him. I can see why his perfect physical beauty attracts and his hearty manner wins friends. But Otho thinks he talks too loud. Otho don't exactly approve of Mollie McCross. He don't enjoy Louis Allwood. He hates Syllabub. But I can afford to let him have his opinions. We can't expect everything of men!

Francis Haythorne advised me to travel in Europe, the other day. He said it would enlarge my mind!

Amos and little Doppy never fret me. They are always loyal and affectionate, and full of tact. I give music lessons to their daughter; and we plan to send the boy to college.

I saw brother Chandos and Sam Slaughton last week, and Aunt Elinor. They all send you their love, and say you may hear from them in person.

Sincerely yours,

CHRISTABEL GOLDSMITH.

TO
ELIZABETH J. HAMERSLEY,
OF
HARTFORD, CONN.,
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

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PEACE PELICAN,

SPINSTER.



CHAPTER I.

BUBBLES.

“And when he saw his eyes were out,
With all his might and main
He jumped into the bramble bush,
And scratched them in again.”



HE January sun was shining on the ice-fringed firs about the Covert, setting the air and scene ablaze with wintry diamonds. Even through the listed windows of the cottage sitting-room one could hear, as the wind struck them, the sharp, cold crackling of the brilliant stalactites hanging from eaves, trees and fences. And the poor garden plants stood like so many crystallized emblems of Lot’s wife, sorrowing after departed summer joys.

But this only gave warmer contrast to the indoors, where Mollie blew bubbles whose swelling spheres swam in opal tints, and veined about the pipe-mouth like Aladdin’s magic spellful fruits.

Gorgeous they were, and intangible as poets' dreams, every moment freshly born, orbing to the full, then shattered.

There was something pathetic in the little tableau. The actors were conscious of it, though it didn't seem to mar their amusement.

They were only two—a sick old man, and the girl, bending such earnest attention on the pipe between her rosy lips. The contracted muscles on one side the invalid's face told of paralysis. He was watching the sport with pleased attention (albeit love of his graceful playmate was its chief element), as he lay back in his stuffed reclining chair.

The kneeling maiden's face was bright with the frolic. Before her was spread a gray blanket shawl on which she skillfully threw a troop of the painted spheres, and watched them roll lightly hither and thither, glowing with prismatic colors.

"Ammonia and glycerine are all very well," cried the invalid, in a thin, meek voice, that quavered up and down, "but I blew bigger and finer with mother's soft soap, when a youngster. They were full half a bushel round."

"This isn't much less," said Mollie, after a few seconds' diligent application to her task, withdrawing her head to view the yellow trophy at a distance. "Nothing could be finer! It's gone! Those little ones on the flannel are almost all left. I'll take up one, I think they blow brighter."

As she bent forward the door suddenly opened, and a rude draught shattered the whole fragile array; and a young man entered in a hurry.

He was tall and slender, and, for all his haste, his motions had an aspect of deliberate intention. Perhaps their noiseless exactness, or his soft, mouse-col-

ored garb, that matched his thoughtful face, combined to lend this look. Even his orderly locks and white, tapering fingers, expressed calmness. What ever disarranged those short auburn rings, or agitated that plump little hand? He was evidently a familiar friend at the Covert, for the sick man's startled glance brightened from anxiety to pleased recognition, and Mollie nodded a quiet "good-day," without rising.

"Guess what my basket holds," said the new-comer, speaking with a leisurely slowness that would have been a drawl, but for his clear articulation and harmonious tone. "It is for Deacon McCross, with Miss Doppy Mulligan's compliments. Amos brought it to the office this morning. He wished me to say that the fighting cocks were his contribution, and he hoped Zack was in health."

"I think often of St. Augustine," answered Mollie; "he sighed over the distractions of the chase, and said, 'as I ride on, though I turn not aside the body of my beast, yet still incline I my mind thither.' I have the same feeling toward a cock-fight. Zack not only challenges his fellow-roosters, but even the scarecrow at the bottom of the garden."

"You never come without something," said the old man, whose eyes had at once fastened expectantly on the wicker secret. "But for you and Mollie the days would be far longer. He isn't half the dawdler he was, eh, daughter?"

"Well, as Goethe says, 'one must do more when he is old than when he was young,'" assented the visitor, with a look in Mollie's direction, that showed the allusion was for her. Then he gave her two novels (which she instantly sank back on the carpet to look over), and next drew forth a pair of fighting cocks, made of pumpkin seeds, and hung to a bit of

rattan, and an air castle, glorious in straws and red flannel. The deacon delightedly set the birds at their ferocious contest, with his well hand; and subsequently Francis Haythorne hung the flytrap to the chandelier, according to minute directions, and by the aid of numerous cautions as to breaking his head, neck and legs, dictated by the sufferer's fears, nerves, and a love of giving advice.

“What set you at blowing bubbles, Miss Mollie?” said he, descending from his perch, and smiling at her whimsical task, to which she had now returned, while he carefully dusted his fingers and coat sleeve with a handkerchief of exquisite fineness. “I believe there's nothing you are too young or too old to do. What is the secret of an age that, instead of unraveling in life's labyrinth, is an elastic thread knotted fast about the cradle of infancy, and only stretching a little as Time strides on with the other end in his grasp?”

“That's only half compliment,” retorted Mollie. “If I wasn't younger than I feel I shouldn't be flattered. I think single-minded people, who know the value of simplicity, can afford to laugh on all decent opportunities. Only folks who have to look two ways at once need be blind to pleasures underfoot. But I was amusing papa as well as myself. He likes bubbles. Is your existence so contemptible, or so devoted to great issues, that you are astonished?”

She paused in her occupation to survey him, partly curious, partly sympathetic. She was sure of his state of mind without asking, in view of certain disappointments lately enacted in his history; but she wondered if the reticent fellow would admit them.

“My life is worthless,” answered he, with a certain bitterness of tone ill disguised by his playful manner. “It's a burst bubble.”

“And you’re the broken pipe that blew it, and Fate has tipped over the dish of soap-suds!” suggested the young girl.

“True! you can jest if you like. I first experienced misery. But for the excitement of experimenting on Dr. Jenkins’s patients, I could hardly have crawled through the last few weeks. I never suspected any woman could be so necessary to me. Missing the acid of her temper, my days are tasteless. Her personality abstracted, every picture loses its foreground. Suffice it to know that Teufelsdrockh rose into the highest regions of the empyrean by a natural parabolic track, and returned thence by a quick perpendicular one.”

“Why, this is frightful!” cried Mollie. “At the Carlyle stage in less than a moon, and all because she told you a few plain truths at which you laughed.”

“Truth is a torch, but a monstrous one, so we blink at it, afraid of burning ourselves.” When Francis Haythorne nowadays quoted Goethe he wore an air of sulky persistence. “Besides,” he went on deliberately, “it’s nothing to grin. It’s man’s ultimate state —as a skeleton.”

“Happy thought,” said Mollie, looking rueful.

“Of course when she gets ready she’ll marry me,” pursued the suitor, coolly. “But meantime I am so sheared of half my existence, that I feel like the men of Jabesh Gilead. I have resolved to ask your advice.”

“I’m glad you’ve resorted to Bible reading,” retorted Mollie, a little nettled at his certainty of the future, as a depreciation of her sex. “This astounding frankness on the part of your reticent highness frightens me. What is grave enough to open your mouth, should shut mine.”

The owner of the said mouth (a very handsome

one, decorated with a silky red mustache), closed it angrily, and seemed half-minded not to speak again. But there are times when the most self-contained must have an outing. I doubt if any but a criminal ever went speechless of his troubles through a whole life. Why, the worst agony of crime is that it can't be talked over!

“I have come to you professionally;” resumed Francis Haythorne. “I have noticed that sooner or later every one acknowledges to you his membership of the Universal Skull and Bones Society. I am too much a doctor either to despise a lady's simples or to be ashamed of catching an epidemic.”

“The only simple I have is a compound,” said Mollie, “and my advice is David's—‘Tarry in Jericho till your beard is grown.’”

“If by Jericho you mean Millville, I resolved to do that some time ago.”

“And in order to cure your faults and so suit your adored—a little unselfish work for the poor—”

“In short, your last hobby,” interrupted the doctor, disconsolately.

“I could have told you that I think advice exactly like medicine,” returned Molly, with composure. “It is dangerous to administer, bad to taste, and should not be tampered with.”

“But I promised to try the prescription. The more horrid the better.”

“Three evenings a week of teaching night school, a whole winter's continuance of the help you have volunteered Dr. Jenkins?” said Mollie, doubtfully.

“Yes, I'll take a malicious pleasure in exhibiting the Sybarite in a new light to Miss Peace. It's not disappointed love that has thrown me out of my mental equilibrium. The fact is, last winter I got so in

the habit of talking to Miss Pelican, that I don't relish the thought of crawling back into my shell. Her gladiolus is only less appropriate to her than thistles and nettles."

"I'm glad the shell pinches you," said Mollie, "it's a sign you've grown."

"How you do deal out aloes and asafœtida."

"Never mind. Take a pipe? Father's just waked up in time to see your skill."

"The sound of sweet and cheerful conversation was indeed like a soothing song in mine ears," said Deacon McCross, beaming mildly on the doctor. "I awaken refreshed, but doubt much if you can equal daughter in her graceful sport."

"I feel as if I could," answered the young man, who, having talked out his griefs, was as light-hearted as a dandelion. "I'll see."

He accordingly knelt beside the basin, and, inserting one of the three or four clays on the floor, presently began to grow skillful. Mollie, meantime, indulged in a little joke with her father over some bubbles which she threw in the air to alight unbroken on the unconscious Sybarite's curls, and stand up like a glory.

"Did you ever blow a double one?" asked the deacon, after watching the game some minutes.

"No, sir," the young man was in a perfect wilderness of bubbles by this time, and pressed for opportunity to speak. "Did you, Miss Mollie?"

"Yes, with Louis." A shadow crossed the girl's peaceful face as she answered, and she pronounced the name, with a slight, loving hesitation. When we speak of peace in human faces, we often mean that they bear the impress of sorrow, not dead, but dominated. Mollie plainly enough carried her own griefs. "We

had an afternoon of blowing them in the orchard, just before he went away to Top Town all those years ago. I haven't done such a thing since, till to-day." She still spoke, as if self-obliged.

"Daughter," said the invalid, "it would be kind of funny for you and Francis Haythorne to take one together, wouldn't it?"

"If he thinks so," replied McHie, dutifully. It was like perverting a sacrament to her to re-enact with a stranger one of her foolish memory treasures. She was a little angry at the doctor for consenting, which he did with a modest blush, but not a symptom of reluctance.

So they dipped up a drop of soap suds, and Mollie dexterously inserted her pipe in the watery sphere her companion was inflating. Then moving away with care, as they blew to keep the shape, they succeeded in swelling its proportions to very nearly the deacon's vaunted half bushel.

After all, it was only transparent. Looking down between his reddened and puffed-out checks to examine its huge outline, Mr. Haythorne, whose back was toward the door, saw reflected, as in a mirror, the noiselessly opened vista of the hall. Peeping into the sitting-room were a pair of immense black eyes, all alight with mirth, and the slender hand they owned was stuffing a kerchief into a cherry mouth to insure silence. And eyes and hand (its mate was pressed against a panting bosom, the loveliest shape imaginable), and the erect, supple figure they adorned, were all swaying together in a gust of laughter. Just so a tall young fir will bend its graceful fringed boughs, and stately head, and even its taper trunk, at the frolicsome bidding of a merry breeze.

The ready blood mounted to the roots of the doctor's hair, and his shell-like ears grew burning red, but he

continued his occupation with attentive gravity. This seemed to add to the glee of the beautiful spy, who finally dropped her mouchoir, and trilled forth her delight to her heart's content. Startled by the joyous peal, Mollie moved, the airy planet broke into spray, and the young Juno sprang into the room before they had time to change their absurd position.

“ Maximian the Great, on his knees ! this is too kind of heaven !” cried she. “ What have I ever done to be rewarded thus. Tell mother I die happy.”

“ Maximian ?” said Mollie, with a little interrogative frown. She didn’t care at all for the young goddess’ mirth provided the doctor didn’t. As for the bubble that was also his misfortune and nothing to her. But she hoped the genius of aggravation was not going to stalk forth.

“ Yes, on account of the maxims. It’s all my own invention, like the White Knight’s, and so appropriate. Blow ye winds of the morning—blow—blow—blow ! just one more to please me. You’ve no idea how funny you looked. Virgil amid his little Georges ! Hercules and his distaff ! Maximian blowing bubbles ! Dear Mr. McCross, don’t mind. I can’t help it. It was the mildly approving look you wore capped all.”

“ If it was my cap, theirs was the cap-er,” palliated the old man, timidly. It was not the least pathetic thing about this sick-room that its sufferer had an air of childlike enjoyment. He submitted to Death’s hand with a satisfied alacrity that could only spring from a sense of relief. There was sympathy and compassion in the laugh with which the young trio greeted the poor, harmless little joke ; but even they bore no look of either foreboding or regret.

“ I will defend my habit in the words of the most arbitrary and most candid of men. ‘ Quotation,’ said

Samuel Johnson, 'is a good thing ; there is community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the parole of literary men all over the world.'"

"Vide St. Twelmo," said Peace.

"And moreover Goethe asserted a collection of anecdotes and maxims to be of the greatest value to a man of the world."

"No doubt. His own stuck out all over him, just like porcupines' quills."

"Miss Pelican," said the Goethe lover, severely, "I can only retaliate in his own words, 'Love of truth is shown by our ability to everywhere find and value that which is right.'"

"I cry you mercy. Forbear! Not the whole edition at once, as you pity a woman's feeble wit. Help, Mollie!"

"It is all your own fault." Mollie was looking on the dialogue with little favor.

"Then I beg pardon ; did I hear you say you had a night-school teacher? I turn the subject in your own inimitable style, you see."

"I have just found one. Mr. Haythorne has volunteered."

Peace gave a derisive and surprised sniff. "'He's the sweet little cherub to perch up aloft and always look out for poor Jack,' is he? I'll take an opportunity to be a dreadful ghost, and sit upon a certain post down there."

"Post no pills—can't you read the sign-board?"

It was perfectly clear that these two people were tormenting each other as much as they were able in a polite way, but Mollie couldn't stop it. "Can you teach arithmetic orally?" said she, reverting to her present anxiety. "There's no black-board ; ultimately there will be books."

"Couldn't they bring their slates with them?"

"They usually have none, I believe. I was thinking physiology would be so nice, told a little every evening. About the skin, and bones, and veins, and nerves."

"I should suppose that would be a good plan," assented Peace, blandly. "Because they *might* bring their nerves there, you know."

Mollie gave a despairing gasp. But when she glanced at the victim, lo, he was smiling at the malicious gypsy with the indulgence strength and love work together. And Peace looked repentant.

"We are not going to be snippy any more," said the aggressor. "There will be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. To make up for my meanness I'll repeat poetry for your edification."

Mr. Haythorne's clear cut features instantly relapsed from the elevation of forgiveness to the lower aspect of patience. He abhorred women's selections. And Peace took special delight in rehearsing the most maudlin rhymes to his edification. She was smiling maliciously now, as she repeated this Sonnet to Bubble :

"In a bowl of fashion olden
Sparkles life's elixir golden,
Round the Iris painted rim
Gaudy hues and pictures swim:—
Hints of shaped grotesque, gigantic,
Laughing masks and figures antic,
Dainty dreams float idly there,
On that convex light as air.
Touch the cup with velvet lip,
Pleasure doth not drink, but sip,
One warm sigh the vase will shatter;
Ah ! 'tis gone—it's little matter—
Only a bubble's glittering sphere,
Its nectar swift distilling to a tear."

“That’s not bad,” said Francis Haythorne, who had been listening with critical interest. “From what book did you extract it?”

“My album.”

He instantly looked as if he wished he had not spoken. Peace, on the contrary, was visibly exultant. “I knew you despised original rhymes, so you never had the benefit of it before.”

“They are usually trash. I think better of this, though. I saw an article somewhere about the strain of sadness that infects all female poetry in America. Like a windflower, its own faint blush is the presage of death.”

“In the first place, this isn’t female poetry : and in the second it may be prophesy of misfortune, but not death,” said Peace hastily. “Its author has certainly fulfilled his most piteous forebodings. I am afraid there is some subtle connection between a poetic mood so characteristically sad, and impending misfortune. I can not account for the verses by this hand in any other way. L. E. L. was another just such augur. You are going to call it superstition, I wish I could think so too.”

“The sadness in women’s poetry is easily accounted for,” suggested Francis Haythorne. “It is the consciousness that they are sent on a mission of pain that first wakes them into song. Poetry and prophesy are twins ; and women are a kind of sub-Christians, such as Bushnell wrote of in *Forgiveness and Law*.”

“Did Louis make that?” said Mollie, changing color as she had done before when his name was on her lips.

“Yes; I thought you would be proud of it. It is a graceful thought, as graceful as himself.”

"I am both proud of it and him;" asserted Mollie, with quiet determination.

A parrot who had been all the while hanging in the window, awoke from her nap in the sun, as Mollie asked her question, and repeated "Louis, Louis, dear Louis, dear Mary, dear Louis, dear Ma, dear Louis, dear Mary, ptchoo," as if recalling a familiar rhyme.

"Polly don't forget," said Peace, smiling at the implication. "Were you always so affectionate, Mollie? 'A sigh too many, a kiss too long,' you remember."

"I remember so well that I will not let Poppy forget," said Mollie. "I teach it to her like the catechism. It is the ghost of a comfort."

"And you don't blush to own it?" exclaimed her friend, playfully.

"Not in the least. Louis and I finished our wooing long ago—in the days when Polly learned her chant. Faithfulness is all we have left. If we were ashamed of that what would become of us?"

"I must go," said Francis Haythorne, who had been growing uneasy ever since the poet came under consideration. He drew a pair of exquisite otter-skin gloves from his pocket as he spoke, and proceeded to fit them on his lily-white hand.

They caught Peace's bright eyes at once. "Sybarite, as usual," cried she. "You ought to have had them made of butterflies' wings. Death's head moth would be neat, and professionally appropriate."

"Very true," returned the doctor, smiling. "You would like to try these, perhaps. I've heard of the clogs of fortune, and dead men's shoes, but not ghostly gloves. The only classic use they have is to declare war."

Miss Pelican took the gantlet extended to her

with some admiration for the beautiful fur, but more wrath at its owner. Her hand, both trim and firm, was by no means large, but the fit was exact. "You ought to feel ashamed to see how it fits me," she exclaimed, dragging it off, and tossing it at him. "I hereby dare you to any feat that requires strength and self-denial, you lady-fingered knight."

"I am no herald, but I never knew a knight to accept his own glove," said Francis Haythorne, with a superior smile.

"That is fair, children," added Deacon McCross, mildly. "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk."

"I intended this pair of luxuries for you, Miss Peace," pursued Mr. Haythorne. "I demand of these witnesses, if I am to be challenged to difficult duties, by an adversary who will not allow me to cancel obligations already contracted."

"You owe me nothing," retorted Peace, haughtily. "I accord you full liberty to make even anything that escapes my memory."

"You mistake. It is hardly a month since you did me the honor to give me the mitten. I now retaliate by presenting you with these gloves, and myself demand the right of challenge."

The young lady trembled with anger, but she took the gauntlets without hesitation. "I will accept and wear them with pleasure in return for the gift you so kindly acknowledge," said she.

"Now let me see you do a woman's work with daintily cherished hands, as I will show you how I can do a man's with my bare ones. You despise me for living easily on an inherited income. After this I earn my own bread. With what self-imposed task have you ever proved your strength?"

“None,” owned the young lady, frankly. “But I shall teach district school when I go home. I expect to begin in the spring. You shall not outstrip me here.”

“Agreed. But you dislike my hand; let us measure, and see who has the advantage.

She fell in with the whim, angry as she was, and the doctor gravely matched palm to palm. His thumb was freer, the muscles in his fingers and small round wrist were fully developed. Inside, his hand was tinted like a shell, his nails were almond shaped and rosy, and the skin dry and cool, and polished like marble. Peace’s fingers felt like crumpled rose-leaves, and exhaled a faint perfume of ottar of rose—the odor she loved; but though she never sat with folded fingers, they always answered to her will. They were part of her superb self. Otherwise the measured hands were just alike.

“You will rule your husband, my dear,” said Deacon McCross. “Your obedience finger is by far the shortest. And, I declare, Haythorne’s are right the other way.”

The young couple drew apart, but neither of them blushed. “I shall never marry until I find a man who is able to be master, and will not,” said Peace, sardonically.

“And I intend to wait for a young lady who couldn’t be mistress, even if I wished it,” retorted the doctor.

“There is no mastery in love,” cried Mollie, beseechingly. “He that is greatest is servant of all. There is no rule so sweet as loving service.”

“And such is my devotion to—well, we’ll put it Dr. Jenken’s patients,” said Francis Haythorne, departing as he fired this last shot.

As the young man went out Mollie's mother entered with a Bible and a vinaigrette in her hand, ready, apparently, to take a walk. My darling's dearest friends could not deny their family resemblance. But it was the likeness of apple pie to cracker apple pie.

"I should think," said Mrs. McCross, "that any one as close to his final reckoning as you, Elizur, would be in better business than wasting your fleeting breath in bubbles. If I was as near my end as you, I'd be settling my account with prayers and tears."

"Jes so," said the old man, guiltily. "I told daughter it was a wicked wasting of my time. I knew—"

"*I* knew," interrupted Mollie, "that whatever gave father pleasure was right. The dear God will be glad."

"Always wiser than your elders! A little humility might be becoming to a chit like you. But I'm late at the Holiness Meeting, and can't stay to entreat. As for Elizur, there's no fool like an old one."

"I know I'm a fool," answered the sick man, weakly, wiping a few tears from his withered eyes as she made her exit, "but the day seemed so bright with them pretty things risin' an' glowin' like the precious stones of Zion under my eyes, if it *was* trifling the moments. You, daughter, have ever seemed like a lantern to my feet. I followed your light."

CHAPTER II.

THE TRANSCENDENTALIST.

“There is a time, we know not when, a point, we know not where,
The hidden boundary between God’s patience and despair.”

 **F**there should come into your heart the resolve to explore the windings of Onion Avenue, it would be better for you to enter this noble thoroughfare from Top Town Broadway. Here, indeed, as Minerva sprang armed from Jove’s head, so, with one god-like leap, comes Onion Avenue into its superb existence. First a tiny triangular park, full of flower-beds, surrounding a fountain, then lines of American palaces, each embowered in a larger park of its own, full of mounds of foliage plants. Agapanthi and hydrangeas bloom on brown-stone front steps, and an occasional elm wears majestically its century of age, and extends its kindly and dignified protection to the emerald-turfed croquet ground nestling at its feet. Here love the patriarchs to sit, resting against the huge trunks and watching their laughing descendants with fond pleasure that gains piquancy from wonder, for age can not comprehend youth, not even its own. We have our to-days, yesterdays, and, perchance, to-morrows. Only the great I Am has chords to vibrate in harmony with every tension time and pain give our feeble lute-strings.

Thus empowered rises the twenty-roomed mansion modeled after St. Peter’s ; and the cot that fears not to wed the architecture of the Bastile with the Alhambra

by a marriage gift of two pillars of the style of Psamtic for the portico, and a green-house like the Mosque of St. Sophia, and a pleasing union of Shiraz and Holland in the matter of gardening.

But, following the course of our aromatic friend, we presently leave these terrestrial Edens for squares whose only edifices are piles of water pipe, curb stones, notices of sale ; and these again for fields of corn, potatoes, and tobacco, over which we may catch glimpses of the river, and, still further away, hills, blue and faint in the distance, while bluettes and pink bouncing-bets line the fences to give foreground.

Wandering on, we make a sharp turn and come upon an old, sleepy town, the very heart of the onion. A town in a forest of elms, its white homesteads, so modest beneath cool green blinds, long past their centennial, and sprawled comfortably at full length in gardens populous with old-fashioned posies ; while vast beds of the traditionary esculent lurk in the background, and scarlet beans and black currants stand bravely to the fore. Under the elm arches one continually meets huge loads of hay, with perfume rich as roses, dragged by heavy-footed oxen, and carts, hastening toward Toptown, full of rotund vegetables. Thither high-wheeled buggies by the score, with frank-eyed men and graceful girls therein, come out to woo the tricksy divinity who holds divided sway with the esculent in this placid spot.

But before one enters the grassy precincts of this hamlet, where there are more Katys than katy-dids, and more fields of nicotine than Nicks to till them, we must have seen a wide, brown building, too ugly not to be edificated vice, be its parentage what it might, set far back behind a barren stretch of turf, fenced by a scraggy buckthorn hedge, approached by

a long, straight, weedy, graveled path leading to a little door, reached in turn by a flight of foot-worn wooden steps. A building with a self-satisfied smirk on its unblinking, squatly, hard-favored front, such as one recoils at involuntarily. So that one hardly needs to be told that this is the Top Town penitentiary, kept upon what is known as the silent congregate system, run—like any other machine—on the contract plan, which system was first invented and applied by Captain Elam Lynde in the great prison of Sing Sing, and depends for its efficacy solely upon fear of bodily pain, as traditions of the Inquisition, Russia, and the slave market have combined to supply the instruments.

But though we have arrived hither by the broad villa-gemmed road that Top Town loves to travel, we could formerly always meet Mary McCross's thoughts here, come by a very different path—one surveyed by pain and cared for by memory. First, they songt Peace's aristocratic abode in Gramercy Place; then they descended to the beautiful sample room of Mr. Abimelech Pelican, known as the Night-blooming Cereus; thence painfully toiled back to the jail in Millville, and anon hastened to the cell that held her one treasure—the sweetheart of her girlhood, the sorrow of her young life, and as the agitated elements of that life crystallized into purpose—its center. And as Mollie's love found its own route, so, by devious paths, came many another thought from Millville. Dorothea Mulligan and Amos Daley, and their quondam playmate, Johanna Haverty, often paused to spend, in fancy, a sorrowful moment in this abode of agony; and even old Miss Pettingil, the village tailoress, would occasionally heave a sigh in the endless contest between the eye of her needle and her waxed end of thread, as she remembered the denizens of her affection in days of yore.

However, these good people did not enshrine in pity quite the same portrait. Miss Petingil bethought herself of a pair of muddy, black eyes, capped by a low, slanting forehead, a crop of bristly, black curls, and a long mustache sheltering red, full lips—in short, the combination of peculiarities once known as Tom Knox, her cousin. Mollie's Syllabub friends kept in remembrance a caroty-topped, blear-eyed, weak-spirited companion, Christie by name. And Mollie herself never for one instant forgot Louis Allwood—the man she believed innocent, had idolized in his gracious boyhood, and now clung to, in stained honor and crippled manhood, with a tenderness that perhaps lacked little of being desperation.

The objects of these several memories worked in the same shop. Their cells were side by side. Their eyes daily sought the same patch of flowers in the little quadrangle. When they marched in line, to and from their cells, their hands were on each others' shoulders. Day after day they did the same things so exactly, that one might have changed them as one would steel pens from the same box, and never known the difference.

In their ugly gray dress, with shoulders rounded over their work into the prison stoop, one could suspect them of having been metamorphosed into geodes by some malevolent fairy. But, inside the crust no two geodes are alike. If Johanna Haverty, Mollie, even old Miss Petingil, had been led to observe the parallel, they would have rejected it with anger. But civilization has both supplied and insisted upon it.

There is a curious story, that the traveler in the desert sometimes comes upon one of these round balls of stone. Accident or interest reveals the liquid treasure within. In rash thirst the goblet is drained, and

the partaker at once hardens into granite. In this light the geode comparison might be pushed further. It is perilous to shatter even these extreme examples of hardened humans, and seek to live on the result. There is a property of death in them. To put it in another way, selfishness is moral solicic acid; and now, ye stony-hearted, Bible-reading Christians, deny my metaphor, if ye dare.

Climbing the aforesaid hollowed steps, and passing through the guard-room, we enter the dormitory, whose four tiers of cells are reached by skeleton iron stairs. We peer through the gratings—ajar now, for the men are in the shops—and observe the little plenishing of these retreats for humans: the bed, the stool, the shelf, the tiny gaslight, by which one can read, if one knows how, till nine o'clock on winter nights.

High up in the farthest corner of this hideous honeycomb, on a certain day some months previous to the last chapter, were three cells bolted fast; and since all else seemed deserted, we might have heard their inmates using their forbidden privilege of speech, in cautious whispers.

“If you'd took my advice, we might ha' been far away by this time, an' saved all this. How many did you get? You don't bear malice because I helped you into trouble?”

“No,” responded a voice that, though evidently sharpened by present agony, was remarkably gentle and sweet. “Don't talk about it.”

“Yes, I will,” persisted the first speaker. “Now, listen to me. When they begin on a man, they don't let up while his bones 'll hang together. Mark my words, you'll neither find a chance to work out your time by being under discipline, or have strength to do your stint from this out. I've been in half the prisons

in the States, but none like Top Town when they've begun on a fellow."

Failing reply, the same man proceeded. "How long is it since Malone's ben in his cell? He's the worst luck of any. Wasn't it yesterday week they sent him to the black-hole? You needn't say. This is his first day out. They'll have him raving—chained like a dog in a kennel, as the one they've got that way so long—afore he sees freedom. If you'd hear me, we could get over the wall, hide in the standing corn, an' off to the gold mines, where no one ever asks a man's right name, or wants to. I've got a broomstick and a nail, and I can open every lock in the building with them."

"Your offer is kind, Knox," responded his companion. "But I cannot see it as you do. You can go when and where you like, unhindered by me; but I shouldn't quit this place if its doors were wide open. Not that I wouldn't gladly be free. I would, God knows! But I must be so altogether, and feel that wherever I choose to stay, there I'll fear no human face. The man that put me here has robbed me of much, but not of my future. This would be sheer giving it to him. I have been a gentleman. I shall be again."

"Well, I ain't, and never was," retorted his hearer, angrily. "I take it as an insult when you mention it. I'm Tom Knox, professional thief, and good as you any day."

"If you are not better, you have little to boast of," said Louis, mildly. "I intended no such distinction. We both purpose returning to the manner of life to which training and principle incline us. That is what I wished to say. You would hoot at me if I made pretensions to proficiency in your vocation."

"True as you're born," responded Knox, mollified. "I've a dozen jobs waiting me this minute. D—n it, how they do hold on to one."

There was no response from other side the wall, and the man recommenced :

"I'm not the worst fellow on legs. I've done kind things in my day, and have a tender conscience. As for stealing, I inherited it fairly from my old skinflint, Presbyterian deacon of a father. I can't help it more than I can help breathing. I never yet saw a thing that it didn't set me to thinking how it could be bagged. I've some education, and I've reputation too. I've a name in England, and there's record of me in the Police Bureau at Paris. I come by my talents legitimately. My dad's lamp would burn till three o'clock in the morning, while he sat contriving legal ways to rob the orphan in his care, the widow in his debt, and the workmen in his shop. He hoarded, he schemed, he starved his family; he broke mother's heart. I have his head; he was a wise one! but my heart's mother's. Many's the greenhorn I've given back his money to, after a night's gambling. Once I was running a foot-race in Kentucky. I'd gained the regular one the day before. This was extra, for a made-up purse, against a three-year-old stallion never trotted in public before, and not trained. I was well along the course, in good wind and time, when a child ran straight into the track, in our way, and stood there, chubby and simple, lookin' at us comin'. I knew Fripon, who was drivin', 'ud never turn out, an' the kid seemed too plump an' innocent to be killed, so I was just the fool to stop an' jerk it out of the path. I lost my breath, jockey Fripon laid on the whip and pocketed the money. Can you tell me the business man that gives back the dollars filched from some

ninny, in honorable speculation? or foregoes a successful enterprise because a smiling simpleton stands in his way? No! He joins in schemes which have for their express object the grinding of the faces of the poor, and his fellows uphold him. I've a girl in near every town. But one time, I remember, when I was off with a circus, traveling, a pretty young thing, that was half companion, half servant, to a crusty old couple, left home and followed me. She came to the employees' tent at night, and said she was tired of being honest, and meant to go with us. But I see she was half sorry she'd come, now she was in for it; an' her chance wasn't spoilt yet. And says I, 'Sis, do you know when you lose your plump, red cheeks, and bright eyes, and sweet, velvet mouth, us fellows will care no more for you, and drive you away, to drag out a horrible, starved life?' Well, sir, she began to cry, an' I wrapped her up, an' took her home, an' talked to her like a Dutch uncle, and made her promise she'd stay there, an' no one ever knew she'd left the premises. I've see gentlemen that would ha' done quite different. An' I give to soldiers' homes, and seamen's homes, and hospitals, when I have the money; and, most of all, to orphans—I pity the orphan."

"I am sure of it," said Louis, cordially. "What a life you have led!"

"That's so," agreed Knox, with emphasis. "But I can't rot here, under these brutes; I must get away. It wouldn't need much to get our gang to rise, lay the overseer, an' quit. We could do it to-morrow, if you'd go in."

"Indeed, I shall not," exclaimed the young man, in horror. "Will you add murder to your other burdens? If you raise a disturbance I'll help put it down. I *will not* be entangled in such a devil's plot."

"Then I lump you together with the class you love," cried Knox, savagely. "You cling to them, though they despise you. I've showed you my friendship, and you scoff at it. My hand is against you all. Wherever we meet, you'll rue this day."

As he spoke, the regular stamp of the lock-step sounded on the flags, and the gangs from the shops entered, one by one. The ranks broke at the foot of the stairs, and the men flew up the narrow path like leaves before a bitter wind. Following leisurely, the overseers soon locked them all in their cells, and retired to refresh themselves after the cares of the day.

The humans thus easily disposed of sat down to eat their supper of mush and molasses, which they had taken from the table by the wall on their way thither. There were worms in the sour pudding, and water in the syrup. After their lukewarm delights were considered, most of the men threw themselves on their beds in attitudes of utter weariness. The summer sun was still above the horizon, but the narrow, thick-walled windows and heavily-grated doors admitted hardly more than twilight. The air, never of the purest, from the swampy ground where the prison was built, was not renewed by over-much ventilation. Three hundred artisans huddled together therein speedily rendered it fairly noisome. Under its benumbing influence they grew stupid, and fell asleep.

However, a few occupants of this Christian retreat, either from pain or different organization, proved wakeful. As soon as Swallow, the overseer, had retired from his task of inspection and making fast, Knox produced a shoe-knife from his bosom, and a long stick, which had been sometime hidden in his bed. If these prisoners' couches are ripped open, their depths sometimes contain strange and forbidden stuff.

ing. Knox had a variety of treasures thus concealed. A little store of money, obtained heaven knows how ; a file ; a bunch of thread, evidently filched an inch or so at a time from the sewing machines ; a bundle of dry crusts the painful savings of many a scanty meal. Moreover, pinned up here and there about the cell, were five photographs of different young women, which had reached him in letters from their originals ; and it is certain none of these ladies—all of them handsome—were aware of the others' existence. Their possessor was accustomed to stand contemplating them alternately before he went out to work in the morning.

But this evening they were thrown altogether into the background by the business in hand. After carefully fitting the knife into the end of the cane, he wound it round and round with thread to give it firmness, and when all was complete, tried it complacently, to test its strength. Then setting up his pillow he began making lunges at it with the blunt end. At every blow he smiled, and muttered, "that would have fetched him," under his breath. It was clearly no mere gymnastic exercise that this man, with bleeding back and bruised bones was performing. The pillow was practice target for a struggle with no less a person than good Mr. Swallow. When Knox had exhausted his energies, and hidden his weapon under the mattress, he felt content and prepared for rest. Taking off his boots, to display the stumps of feet frozen in escape from a western prison, he crowded into their tenantless toes his hoard of bread. His purse he tucked into his bosom ; the bundle of thread was carefully knotted into a tolerably stout cord; the file useless in the contemplated flight, dropped through a knot hole in the floor, into the cell of the man below. A few moments after Knox was asleep.

Meantime Louis had been differently employed. Throughout his talk with Knox had occasionally been audible a sound, painful at all times, but exquisitely so in these stony surroundings, where all suggested hopelessness—a stifled sob.

He could not bear it. Crossing his cell, he knelt and put his mouth close to a tiny hole bored through the solid masonry. It was so hidden in the darkness of its corner as to be only perceptible to the expectant eye, but small as it was, it had cost the labor of years. Louis had inherited it from the man who committed suicide just before his arrival, and so vacated the premises for him. "Christie," said he, softly; "I can hear you. The guard will be up if you aren't quiet."

There was a rustle on the opposite side of the wall, as the man approached the crevice, to answer doggedly: "I can't help it; I am heartbroke; I shall never live it out."

His voice was husky, as if coming through tears, and for a moment Louis had no word of cheer to give. He put his slender fingers together in silence, and seemed to pray, and soon resumed eagerly: "Be a man, old fellow. It's very hard, but you are young. Your time is half served already. Will you let them strip off your manhood as their blows do your skin? Be strong."

"I hain't no strength," returned the thin, quavering young voice. "I mind me o' Joe, when I often gave her me fist. She that 'ud be so bauld to the world, cowered afore me. It's in harder hands 'n mine the poor thing is by this; but I warn't easy on her nuther."

"Then I'd try to be faithful to my duties here, and so have power and health to make her happy when I got out. Isn't that something to be brave for?"

Louis was trying to adapt his own salvation to his

companion's need. But alas, there must be a separate formula of hope for every man, or there is not hope for all. Our souls are not problems in solids, the figures having every one the same cubic contents.

"How do I know she'll be livin', or if so be as she bees—you know how. No, it's no use. I am here like them animals we seed them times in the circus. Sure after a little they lay down in their cage and die, an' small loss."

"Think on the good God, on Christ," urged Louis. Hidden by the wall, his modest blushes dyed his very forehead, as he brought forth out of his innermost heart this treasure of consolation. "He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation ? for he was cut off from the land of the living. For the transgression of my people was he stricken. Don't you see he has been through it all, and can put himself in our place?"

How easily the words came, here, in hour of need ! With what a peculiar meaning they were suddenly invested ! And their sound was sweet to Christie's ears, like poetry read in an unknown tongue. But life is only the grammar and dictionary of God ; and Christie had not yet learned the first definition.

"Them's good idees," said he, after a pause, with a shade of tenderer regret in his voice. I can't read nor write. I was allus the fool amongst the fellows ; but one time Miss McCross telled me o' them in Sunday-school. Sez I, 'That's all lies,' but p'raps they ain't. If I'd heered to her I shouldn't a got here anyway. She an' you is just alike." The care of this poor atom was Lonis' daily tribute to the woman who first sought to bring it light. He felt himself nearer her with every sigh he gave to this wretched being ; rich in every tear he stayed. But this was a place where

morbid living and physical weariness made men children. Coupled with her in loving union, by grateful and stammering lips, the hardly won composure of the would-be comforter gave way. He laid his cheek against the cold wall, and wept bitterly. His Mollie! His noble, faithful love! How did her faith heal every bitter cup of its poison, and in all his wretchedness work his daily salvation!

So long and intense was his passion of tears, that Christie, tired of waiting, threw his aching bones on his bed, where he tossed and turned, sleepless with pain and despair, far into the sultry night.

By and by Louis gathered himself up; lit his glimmer of gas, brought out pen and ink, and a marble covered blank book, and began reading and correcting its contents with increasing cheerfulness.

“‘The first step toward mastering a subject in detail is to understand its definition. A diary is a faithful mirror of one’s self-deceptions.’ It shall be so no longer,” Louis drew his pen through the platitude disgustedly. “Now we’ll review the verses.”

MINE EYELIDS PREVENT THE MORNING.

The storm, threatening and howling,
To silence dies,
Through the chill darkness prowling,
Gaunt shapes arise,
Ghosts a’ walk in the meadow
My fancy sees,
Memories incarnate in shadows
Of swaying trees.

Through pain and vigil weary,
The night doth wane,
Morn dawneth gray and dreary,
Mantled with rain.

There flitted by an oriole with sunny breast
 Uprisen with the daylight from swinging nest,
 Eluding sight and hearing—
 Shining, then disappearing—
 Image of rest.

Sweet nymphs of pleasure airy,
 Haste, comfort me,
 Content, gazelle so wary,
 My comrade be;
 Wounded I lie, and bleeding,
 And pity's all unheeding,
 And dread's my company.

“Thank God I am past *that!*” said the critic, carefully pinning the offending leaves together. “I feel a better strength since I know Mollie is mine. The evil days are past, when I must say I had no pleasure in them. I will make a song to my darling. Some happy time we will read all the book to each other, and rejoice in the contrast.” Drawing the ink toward him, he began to write eagerly :—

“ODE TO MY CELL.”

Ye four damp walls that hold me fast,
 No more in tears eat I my bread,
 This one bright hour your rule is past,
 And I can wander fancy led.

Awake I watch the rising moon
 Shed its fair glory round my bed,
 Just as the star o'er Bethlehem shone,
 Above my Lord's low cradled head.

It was no star set in the sky
 That o'er the Saviour, shone that night,
 'Twas Heaven oped its door on high,
 And from the threshold close and nigh,
 Angels were gazing pure and bright.

So in this glimmer cold and white
(I dream, and as I dream I weep),
One gentle watcher of the night
To heaven sues, my care to keep,
And through her lattice these pale gleams of light,
To me do creep.

Or in the moonbeams lambent play
Lineaments dear I seem to trace,
Set saintlike in the shining ray,
My own sweet saint's, my Mollie's face.

Too soon the holy vision flies,
Rude voices at the guarded door—
Arms clanging on the stony floor—
Misery itself, the dream denies.

But in the early summer morn
A brighter fresco paints my cell,
Love's crimson messenger, new-born—
Comes the swift day, its tale to tell.

Gray walls put on its rosy dye—
The radiance fills the very air,
Changing and glowing with each sigh,
Such tint my Mollie's cheeks do wear.

And yonder, hidden from my sight,
The sky appears in softest blue,
Forget-me-nots with this be dight,
My darling's eyes do wear it too.

Now, as the sun puts forth his might,
My pulses stir right cheerfully,
My love's sweet prayers dispel my night,
And love hath made the prisoner free.

"Yes, I am free!" murmured the youth, closing the book, and smiling. "I am a prisoner of hope. Now I can work."

He took a penknife from his pocket and brought to

the light a piece of broom-handle. The homely stick was evidently a cherished possession, for he turned it over and over eagerly, and vented a long, pleased sigh. "Yes, I remember; my flute was just this length," whispered he. "And here were the holes." He carefully cut the openings, spreading his fingers in the well-learned position, to test his accuracy, and with the help of some shoe-nails riveted on the previously whittled keys. When all was complete, he raised the soulless shape to his lips in satisfaction. "I can play it silently, as I hoped," said he. "It is like old times. I am no longer lonely." He spread a sheet of beautifully copied notes on the bed, and kneeling, began to play them with precise adjustment of instrument and fingers. "How stiff my hands are," regrettfully, after a few minutes' practice; "but I will soon have them flexible again. Now for a scale. Ah! it is nine o'clock—they have turned the gas off. But I can rest to-night. I can pray, too, with all my heart. God is our refuge and our strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear——"

With his treasure in his hand, he was soon smiling in childlike slumber; a poor boy who never yet had seen the truth in its nakedness, but viewed all things through the prism of his own gentle trust.

That Mollie in any degree approached his conception of her, was one of those strange coincidences to be looked for but once in a lifetime, and one that actually never duplicated itself for him as regards any other human being.

CHAPTER III.

THE ESCAPE.

"One, two, three, four, five, I caught a hare alive ;
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten, I let him go again."



HE first thing Louis saw when he looked through his grating next morning was a piece of white paper traveling along the staging. There was a stone in it, to give it weight, and every man hooked it into his cell, read, and pushed it within reach of his neighbor. Those who were unable to decipher writing had no difficulty with this, for it was in hieroglyphics. A rude quadrangle was drawn in the center; scaling the wall were a quantity of figures, and two or three people conspicuous for coats with tails (officers, consequently), were on their knees in an attitude of prayer. Its journey through the entire building was a slow and dangerous business, but before night it was accomplished in safety. Even if detected, however, there was no trace of authorship to implicate the draughtsman.

The unquenchable Knox was alert and joyful. He had been dressed in time to have another set-to with his pillow before the guard let him out to light the engine fire, and make ready for his comrades' labor, which constituted his first item of duty. In his target practice he observed with pleasure how accurate and powerful was his aim, and refreshed his memory by a contemplation in his mirror of the still raw welts left by yesterday's beating. His pale face, disfigured by a three days' growth of black beard; his muddy eyes,

and mouth drooping at the corners, wore an expression of malevolent energy rare at Top Town penitentiary. He not only meant to escape, but to have his fill of revenge.

When Swallow came up to let his men out after breakfast, he paused a moment to say a word or two to Louis. The boy was nowadays often called on to display his talents for carving, sketching, and poetizing for the benefit of his superiors. The prison was proud of him. It is a delightful thing to see genius and be able to look down on it from a vantage ground of pre-eminent merit. The turnkeys liked to say to educated visitors: "Why, we've a man who speaks four languages, draws, and handles wood like a sculptor; and, bless you, we've a lien on him for life! They always come back. He's got free lodgings engaged while there's any breath in him."

To-day Mr. Swallow wanted a workbox inlaid for his young lady—for Swallow had such an object. She was as thin as he was fat, and an exact match in temper. He had brought the rare woods with him, and would give the convict certain extra hours of freedom till it should be completed.

Satisfied with the result of his conversation, he deigned to notice Knox also.

"Don't lose your spirits, my boy," said he, kindly. "You have looked down in the dumps of late. I hate to see a critter lose his pluck—get off his feed. Cheer up is the word, you know."

This was exactly the sort of commonplace a man bestows on his dog.

"Good puppy! Wag um's tail, don't you. Got his ears chawed. Shouldn't do that. Want some breakfast? That's a brave dog."

But when Knox went to his work the refrain ran in

his mind; he lived on it all the morning. "Cheer up is the word." Then, Swallow did mean well; the tone was gentle, too; and he had noticed his sorrowful face, and regretted it. He wasn't extraordinarily harsh, as a rule—not when he was in good humor. He never knocked men on the head as the warden did. He once treated him to a paper of good tobacco, because he had done extra work to help out in a busy time.

When Knox went up to dinner, he hurried to his weapon, tore out the knife and broke the cane into pieces.

"There! I'm glad that's out of my power. I ain't red-handed yet, and won't be for a while," thought he. "I'll get away before the fit comes again, maybe."

That afternoon, among the visitors, arrived half a dozen flashily-dressed men, who made rough jokes all the time they were in the prison, peeped into the cells with lively curiosity, laughed at the gospel shop, objected to the ugly convict cook, noisily tasted the specimens of prison bread offered to their mastication, clapped the guard on the back, and flattered him by inquiring after all the roguish celebrities he had in charge. They bought largely of plated silver, "to benefit some poor cuss," and didn't care for change if it would go into the price.

They were so many that they couldn't all talk at once, and when they reached the shoe shop their interest was unabated.

Hearing tones possibly familiar, Knox looked up. Behind the bewildered guard stood a tall, spare man, neatly dressed in black, with a white lawn necktie, who appeared to survey the shop with a ministerial and inoffensive air. Catching the convict's glance, he deliberately turned and addressed a question to the superintendent, and keeping his eyes fixed on his face with

an expression of interest, and leaning negligently on the little fence that incloses the shop, dropped one white hand over its top. As Swallow's broad presence interposed itself between him and the guard, and Swallow was detailing statistics of convict labor (not including contract price per head), it was an easy thing to make a few signs with that dexterous hand—not ten in all ; they were completely unobserved; but they told Knox that, once in Top Town, he was safe; and he imitated his friend's tactics, in replying, with equal success. The clattering associates went jovially out; the meek specimen of pious appearance followed, reflective and vigilant. Not till all were well beyond the buckthorn hedge that defines the premises of the penitentiary did the party give way to uproarious congratulations.

“He'll break to-morrow or never, he says,” observed the mild confederate, quietly. “We are to expect him.”

“Hurrah for the Professor!” cried they thereupon, and threw up their beavers ; but he only vouchsafed a gentle smile ; and before morning he had by means of faro transferred their bottom dollar to his capacious pockets, and looked no whit fatter, gayer, or more interested in worldly affairs for the effort.

When Louis went down to the shop before working hours next day, and applied himself to the coveted inlaid box (which accounts for his unusual liberty), he saw Knox, who had been let out at the same time, prowling stealthily about the barn. He was not handling leather and preparing for the tasks of the hour, but trying the strength of a braided cord, and investigating the facilities for climbing offered by the wall.

“If I do not watch him I shall see nothing, and so know nothing,” thought the young man. He accord-

ingly turned his back on the window and busied himself with his toil, not once looking away, till his fellows joined him to make shoes the topic of the time.

Knox was with them, as usual, working steadily till breakfast. But before they formed to march to the dormitories, the red-headed Christie found chance to whisper :

“ Tom wants us to rise at noon. Break ranks, run through the barn, out at the side door, up the ash-heap to the top of the wall, drop down by his cord.”

“ Who’s to go first?” said Louis.

“ He.”

“ Then you’ll be shot.”

There was no chance to say more. Christie wavered in his allegiance to the plan. The dinner hour slowly came, and all were housed, with no attempt at flight. But as the line for return was formed, Knox gave a shrill whistle, and darted forward. The man behind Louis followed. Christie would have made the third in this desperate race, had not Louis, who saw its fruitlessness, held him by the shoulder with all his strength. Before he could shake himself free, Knox was fairly over the wall, and his companion had been dragged back by the panting Swallow to taste the sweets of discipline. But he was not brought again into the court, when the gang, seeing their comrade’s case, broke ranks. The men already in the shops poured forth, with shoe-knives, hammers, stools, and lasts in their hands. The guards fired, but their guns were loaded only with blank cartridge. The prison became the possession of furies. The officers were quickly caught, and held quiescent by main force, while the men, beside themselves with excitement, ran round and round the quadrangle, with their heads down, like angry beasts. The ashes that had afforded

Knox such easy means of exit were the first point of attack. But they had rolled down a little in his climb, and, in the hurry and selfishness of the struggle, those nearest only succeeded in crowding each other from the wall. "Let me come ; I've a wife and children !" cried one. "Don't drag me back ; I'm in for life !" called another. "For God's sake, don't trample on me !" implored one, cast to the ground. Those who couldn't enter the narrow alley were hopeless ; there was no other way out. Their rage turned against the overseers.

"Down with the tyrants !" "Who's a knife for their throats ?" "We'll teach Swallow to munch his own fare !" "Yes ; Swallow, he's the worst !" and with one accord they rushed toward him.

Louis had not moved a muscle in the uproar. He stood leaning against the work-shop, with his arms folded, his face a mirror of contending passions—desire for freedom, resolved self-mastery, pity, dismay.

But when he beheld his fellows maddened, shut in, menaced with death from the tardy weapons of the guard in the turrets, and, in turn, in danger of completing the catastrophe by murder below, he flew to the fat overseer, as he hung, apoplectic with terror, in the grasp of two stalwart negroes, and threw himself resolutely before him. "All's lost ! Back to the shops ! Back to the shops !" he cried.

His voice possessed the silver clearness that rules in confusion. It was heard plainly among the hubbub of hoarse, uncultured tones. Moreover, he was the only self-controlled spirit among two hundred baffled, hopeless creatures. After he spoke there was a moment's lull, and next a dozen took up the word. Then Louis gave the man before him a little push forward. *He was a stupid Dutchman, whose faculties*

were too benumbed for vigorous action. He yielded to his will, echoed the shout, "Come on, boys ; it's no use," and stumbled forward.

"The last men out will be considered the ring-leaders," cried the warden.

Instinct, apathy, despair prevailed. The convicts crept, slouching and cowed, back to their places. Swallow recovered his spirits and hunted in the few sullen reprobates who were loth to obey, and order reigned.

No one thought of Knox until, in restored quiet, the prisoners were counted and his loss re-discovered. Meantime, he was fairly out of eyeshot. When he sprang from the wall he came down, as he hoped, in safety in a great field of corn. To work his way, on hands and knees, beneath the tasseling crowns was easy. At the end of the corn was a board fence. He could faintly hear the hubbub at the prison, and so, pulling off his tell-tale jacket, ventured to climb. The next planting was beans and potatoes. He rolled over and over in the steaming earth, like an animal loosed from his stall, not for pleasure, though the scent of growing nature came gratefully to his nostrils, too, but to cover his prison garb with a coat of loamy brown. Below the patch of beans was a meadow of rye. Here he breathed freely. He dared not plunge into the plain of undulating green; but he ventured for the first time to stand upright, and run beside the wall: at the corner he was safe. The rye grew higher than his head; he could skirt it as he liked down to the river's edge.

He drew a long breath, and pushed forward, when to his dismay he beheld, wandering leisurely toward him through the clover, 't'other side the stile, the warden's son and daughter, with their dog at their heels.

None of them had observed him—there was a moment's time. He dashed into the forest of grain, and, well hidden inside, began to walk at right angles to his first track, which he had cunningly laid toward the prison. The young lady drew her brother's attention to the gaping alley opened through their father's field, and proposed an investigation of the trespass. But the sun was hot, and both were weary. "To-morrow will do just as well," Knox heard them say, and the dog, who entered eagerly, following his foot-prints, was summarily called off.

When their voices died away, the trembling fugitive fled to the river and began running up the bank, till he came upon another field of corn, where he lay till dark, and then struck out for Top Town. It was fully eleven at night when, fainting with fatigue and hunger, he reached the maze of tenements that form the lower part of the populous city they once solely represented. Now was his time of greatest danger. Should any wayfarer scrutinize him too closely, he was lost. He chose his path warily, hugging the wall, keeping well in shadow; but of a sudden the sound of a regular tramp, caught his ear: he dodged into the alley between two blocks, to escape a pair of policemen marching vigorously forth to some special duty. They were not out of hearing when he was seized by the shoulder, from behind. He instantly drew the knife destined that morning for Swallow, but before it could be brought home it was snatched, and a woman's voice cried in his ear,

"Tom Knox, where's Christie Malone?"

"Jugged fast as ever," responded the fugitive, surprised into truth. "What of him?"

"I be Christie's Joe. Ye got him in, how bees it yer-out, an' he not. I've a mind to blab on yer."

"I broke to day, and asked him to come, but they caught him 'fore he reached the wall, I spose," whimpered Knox, turning giddy. "He's but sickly, you know."

"No, I don't, rot ye," answered the woman, shaking him, powerful man as he was, with a vindictive energy that made him as grass in the storm. "He went in able; dare the likes of ye say he's wake?"

"He ain't nothin' else," cried the man desperately. "An' what am I, that I seem a child under your hand? Would it be so if I had my strength, d'ye think?"

"Nhe's the same?" said Joe, with a piteous yielding in her tone. "Why, I've see the day he could sling me agin the wall as I would a cat. It's sad to think. Come home wid me. I'll keep ye close. Here, wrap me shawl over ye, to hide yerself, till we be safe within. Ye've seen Christie. Belike ye can tell o' him."

She drew the man after her through the alley, as she spoke, and hurried into a huge building whose walls had settled apart with age, and been propped up here and there to save a total downfall. Up to the garret she led the way, and, unlocking a rough, board door, admitted her charge into an apartment so forbidding in the moonlit gloom, so stifling in the heat beating down all day upon its unlathed roof, that he involuntarily recoiled.

"Come in," said she, dragging off her hood, and flinging it upon a very small and dilapidated hand-organ, in one corner. "Ye'd be worse off in the prison, so make no bones of it."

She lit her candle as she spoke, and held it above her head, to search by its uncertain beams the dusky corners of the attic. Knox was thereby able to see her features in strong relief. She was a tall, power-

fully-built woman, who could not have seen her twenty-first year. But her rude beauty had already given place to haggard cheeks and caverned eyes ; her grace and energy to a heavy-footed shamble. Her hair hung in blue-black masses around her shoulders, which needed its covering to conceal their torn garb. Her buttonless dress fell apart, to display her bosom, which, like her face, betrayed by more than one half-healed bruise, to what straits temper would bring her. Suffering, hunger, exposure, and riot had transformed her into a hag before she had ripened into girlhood. As a fig-tree casteth its untimely fruit, so had humanity shaken her from its nurture, to a decay premature and loathsome, unnoticed at its feet. Knox, who far outstripped her in premeditated vice, was appalled at this unvailed, abandoned depravity. He, the thief of kind impulses, shuddered before this amazon, whose tenderest memories clustered round a blow. She was a mother, too, for a babe lay asleep on a heap of quilts near by. But she was careless of it, for once she nearly crushed it under foot, and her only comment was an angry mutter.

Presently Joe set before him some scraps of meat, in a rusty tin basin, and brought in a pail of water. " Eat and drink," said she, briefly. Then she pulled the child from its resting-place to reconstruct the forlorn couch for her guest ; and when the infant set up a feeble wail, choked its throat, and struck it. It fell mute and motionless where she dropped it, and Knox couldn't bear to glance that way.

" Have ye any money for clothes ? " asked the woman, when her task was completed. " Ye'll be arrested to-night if ye go out in this rig. No ; that will not do," as he produced his little store. " I'll take to the organ fur ye. 'Bide here ; if it's midnight before

I get enough, I'll stay till I can bring yer things wid me."

"Go and find Nickson, and the Professor, and the rest, and tell them I am here ; that'll do better," suggested Knox. "They'll send me an outfit, and word when and where to join them ; thank you kindly."

"It's the same to me ; I'll go immediate. But as ye can't leave this place wid safety fur three good days, I munn earn yer breakfast. The city'll be hunted fur ye this night, so there's nothin' fur't but to lie low where ye be."

Knox assented, and she readjusted her hood and threw the strap of the hand-organ upon her shoulders. "Come along, ye brat," said she, catching the baby from the floor, and hanging its heavy head over her arm.

"Let me take care of it," offered Knox ; "I will be good to it."

"No, they gives better fur me holdin' it. Or—just as well leave it. They be havin' a concert on the middle square, so I be sure of gettin' somethin' in the crowd. Best sleep yersel', if ye can."

She put the child on her shawl, drew her dress together, and went swiftly out, locking the door behind her, and Knox sat down to wait her return, with his schemes for the future and rejoicings at his new-found freedom, for companions.

But glad as he was, the wretched infant at his feet dismayed him. Unfathered ! thus mothered ! He couldn't keep his thoughts from it. It confronted him as might the phantom of his useless remorses at the hour of judgment. He doubted if it could be human. At last he went over and touched it. It was asleep. He heard it breathe in a heavy, opium-begotten slumber. Its blue, emaciated fingers were relaxed ; its

careworn features lifeless ; its purple mouth wide open. It was like Christie in his weakest mood. It was Joe herself, bereft of her last soft emotion. He pulled away the shawl to try if he could see the finger-marks made by its mother's clutch, and it moaned, not humanly, but like a hurt dog, and its features grew hideous with terror.

Knox went and lay down, still watching it, and the thought came to him that its mothering was identical with the care society had given Joe, Christie, and himself. Joe had been Humanity's ward—had been trained by Society, and that of a Christian land ! Such nurture, such mother-love as she had been taught, she gave.

And his heart contracted with a new bitterness as he conned the lesson ; and, whereas he had before been a man, weak and wicked, but full of relentings and repentances, he grew from this contemplation to a resolve to retaliate upon the selfish, fellow-crushing community the wrongs they wreaked upon their helpless dependents.

CHAPTER IV.

JOE'S STORY.

“Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea,
Silver buckles on his knee,
He'll come back and marry me,
Pretty Bobby Shaftoe.”



Nour attempts to knit up this “raveled sleeve of care” the best effort will not always insure smooth seaming. I marvel if the painful inappropriateness of the couplet at the head of this chapter has struck my readers. It was put there for Joe : but what has this daintiest of rhymes, musical with the innocent voices of childhood, redolent of its sweet story of maiden love—what has modest, well-ordered youth—brave and old-fashioned in silver buckles—what has any hope of honorable marriage, to do with Johanna Haverty ? Yes, I acknowledge it, in the whole realm of childish minstrelsy, could not be found a more piteous paraphrase of my tale. And yet, good friend, analogy finds in this very fact a certain fitness. Alas, what is Joe herself but a horrible caricature of humanity. What is her life but an obscene travesty of the fair history of modest and contented girl love ? And yet, with all its palpitating suffering, its ineffectual longing, its blank despair, IT IS.

Democratic Fate makes few patterns for the tapes-tries of life. Their variety depends upon the quality of the material. Thus it happened in the years gone by that the very next trial after Louis' was that of Christie Malone—sentence, three years—crime, grand

larceny. Two women were therefore left lonely in Millville ; and, in sooth, I cannot say which suffered most, the young lady at Fir Covert, or Nick Haverty's Joe, in the half story of the Soloman Rodgers.

Misery has a limitless flexibility. If contentment would bar the cottage, she enters under love's cloak. And it is as useless to talk about capacities for suffering, as to try to square the circle. However, we may be able to estimate the problem roughly, there is always the little fraction of love to put our nicer calculations astray. Moreover, having filled the tiny cordial glass to overflowing, what can you do more with the ale-capped tankard ?—and the quality of the liquor preserves the equation.

Poor Joe ! There had been a time when her cup possessed a pleasant piquancy. As her childish bone-pickings with Christic gave place to long days of labor in the stifling mills, evening brought new sources of enjoyment. Hour after hour the pair strolled together under the gas lamps, chattering and laughing shrilly at each other's wit ; or, ensconced on the steps of the deserted factory, sat side by side far into the night, peered at occasionally by the policeman on beat, all forgotten of the world, till weariness, and the wholesome memory of to-morrow's toil, drove them home.

And think not, young maiden, bedecking yourself for the coming Eugene, fondly hesitating over the nicely balanced merits of lavender silk and rose, that visit and visitor are more to you than these poor walks to the ignorant factory hand. Constantia and Theodosius might find it equally hard to comprehend either phase of affection. But then Theodosius was not brought up in the sickly civilization of our moneyed class, and Constantia never tried the rank, impure atmosphere of a mill.

But with Christie's disappearance behind the bars of Top Town, Joe's halcyon days ended. There were no more promenades down crowded Goncusset street, in the hot Sunday nights when all her kind were out. No more plays viewed from the peanut gallery, and enriched by peppermints; no more fireman's balls; no more gas-lit strolls and noonday meetings—nothing.

Our greatest vices sometimes play the safeguard against their tribe. Bereft of Christie's companionship, Joe found life worthless; and since thought was the origin of her misery, this child philosopher resolved to drown it. Assuming the task with her customary energy, she barely made the day's earnings suffice for the night's carouse.

Doppy Mukigan, who lived down stairs, in the "Soloman Rodgers," had long been one of Mary McCross's treasures. Mollie had given all her strength to the work of her rescue, and little by little succeeded in setting her best self at battle for the mastery. As one child allowed sentiments of propriety and rules of duty to curtail the unbridled license of her Arab infancy, the other drifted steadily and surely into excesses impossible to her tenderer years.

But Doppy, struggling into slowly-earned respectability, was not forgetful of her old companion, and spent many an evening wandering from one gin-mill to another, trying to coax her back to a home where blows and curses awaited them both, for the fathers of these lasses were by no means lacking in such incentives to virtue as beatings and beratings, and their offspring esteemed the time lucky when they were too much overcome by their potations to remember parental duty.

Doppy's friend, Amos Daley, disapproved of her

Good Samaritan exertions, and advised her to let her protégée go to the dogs unhindered.

"Now, Doppy," he once said, crossing his long legs, and leaning against the factory fence, where their noontide interviews were prone to take place, "if a feller makes up his mind to drink, he's agoin' to. I shouldn't thank any one to interfere wid me. She can't be much worse. What's the use o' botherin'?"

"Yis, she can," rejoined Doppy, indignantly; "she can get as hard o' heart as you. An' as for bother, where'd you be to-day if me an' Miss McCross hadn't bothered about you? In the gutter, same as Joe, an' worse, fur you're a good foot taller'n she, an' 'ud have all that more to make a holy show o' yerself wid. An' me havin' been kindly helped, shall I go back on Joe, what depends on me to keep her chin out o' water that she don't drown intire? Never!"

Amos strongly o'jected to this view. "Yer can talk de salt out me dinner, if ye plaze," he said, referring to Miss Mulligan's presumed hinderance of his progress toward that meal, "but the facts is not changed by yer woman's gab."

His intercepted path was instantly opened at this taunt, and in compunction and misgiving the boy secretly followed the offended philanthropist on her nightly rounds. Nor was this attendance unnecessary to her safety, though Doppy would not have acknowledged her danger, even to herself.

At length Joe's absences so increased in frequency and acts of folly, that Master Daley lost patience, and confided his troubles to Miss McCross, who took an early opportunity to remonstrate with Doppy. But that young lady was firm. Joe should not be deserted.

Did she love her so much?

What was it Miss Mollie meant by love?

Did she enjoy her companionship? take pleasure in her peculiarities?

No, she couldn't say that was the case; but if Joe didn't work, she wasn't going to take it on her conscience to refuse her a loaf of bread. And as for the midnight rambles, it was none of Amos's business, and she'd tell him so (which she did). Poor Joe was cast off by every one, and should she, Doppy, her first friend, fail her now, of all times? No, indeed; Miss McCross couldn't ask it.

Doppy was right. Mollie, in her own sore heart, could not blame her little mate in the patience of love. She experienced instead a great outgush of companion feeling, which brought her near soul to soul to the single-minded champion. She resolved not to confuse her with prohibitions, but, trusting to the God of charity to protect her in her dangerous path, set herself to supply such safeguards as she might. "For," she said, inwardly, "a life spent in rejecting pain, in turning to the easy ways, is a shallow, worthless wasting of riches. The tickling of pleasant emotion, if that be the only thing to seek, is an object pursued in common with brutes. But to share the promised God-life, one must, like God, probe the depths of human feeling. There would be no such word as responsibility if its essence were not *painstaking*. If Doppy or I will be of value, we must not shrink from the imposed tasks of common humanity." So she took greater care to have her charge often with her; was more eager to read to her, show her engravings, teach her delicate needlework, and by use develop her reason. She strove to fill her mind with lovely images, to open before her new and delightful paths of thought, to make life seem worthy, noble, and everywhere capable of divine pleasure—the sharing of God's pleasure *when he made it*.

But Amos, whose regard for propriety was a sudden and inconvenient outgrowth, was reduced to despair by Miss Mulligan's resolve, and stated to Joe in some heat that he thought she ought to be satisfied with ruining herself, and let Doppy alone.

Whereupon the girl, who had not recognized herself as lost before, only been blindly conscious of pain, first stormed, then wept bitterly. Finally, nothing better beckoning, nothing loved withholding; went deliberately out to spend the night in the most shameless carouse she had ever known.

And Doppy, writhing with impetuous disgust, could not forsake the living, immortal soul, thus degrading itself. "I can't, Amos; 'taint no use talkin'. She don't never do wrong till she comes to it, and p'raps she mayn't come to it always. She's got to keep making choices forever, you know. I can't let go of her, to see her slip where all the things to take be equally bad."

During that wretched winter Mary McCross made many attempts to gain the confidence of Nick Haverty's daughter. The girl, whose firmest belief was that all kindness conceals veniality, grew at last to single Mollie from the hard-hearted rich, as a being nearly as sincere as her fellow-reprobates. But it is one thing to recognize the truth of your friends, and another to desire any test of such sincerity applied to yourself. Beside shrinking hate and fear of the silken-clad lady, Joe felt at war with all virtue, especially since Amos's interference. Above all, she dreaded contact with Miss McCross, who now formed her ideal of virtue. Just as no one of us would take an angel to board in our homes on any consideration. We have too lively a conception of the expression that angel's face would wear at certain unavoidable occasions.

There was, moreover, no common ground on which

the needy could meet the full; for the only accident in which Fate treated them alike was the very one both women compassed with every defense. The side of their history whose locked doors and battened windows neither admitted nor showed light to any in the world.

Joe, therefore, except to Doppy, to whom consciousness of injury made her sullen, felt no friendly emotion. She absented herself from home for days and nights together; was hunted by the police; and hidden by associates more vicious than herself. She did not even hear of the sudden disappearance of her father till he had been missed a week. During a certain cleaning of Patience of Hope Mission School she hung aimlessly about the chapel; and her great wild eyes, unkempt locks, and loosened rags, which betrayed too well her piteous condition, made a great impression upon the good wives who were amusing themselves in a common triumph of housewifery, by renovating the habitation of Zion. Mrs. Williams said she'd think, for her part, sich vulgar creeturs ought to be shut up. Mrs. Hitchcock loudly warned Euphemia not to "look that way." Mrs. Perfect bestowed a tract about Jezebel upon the waif, which was harmless, for Joe couldn't read.

The first day's work wore on, and as the poor thing, attracted perhaps by the benevolent end of the labor, or by the cheerful voices, or in dread of being left to her own society, kept her place, wild, haggard, and silent, the ladies gave her a few errands to do, and discussed her case between the mouthfuls of cold dinner they brought with them. Mrs. Bizby even offered the girl a part of her good things, which were haughtily refused, though Joe was absolutely suffering for food. By the end of the work, it was unanimously decided that she should go, in room of a more suitable

place, to the Millville Orphan Asylum, and Mrs. Bizby offered to broach the subject.

Joe at first listened in a mixture of anger and fear, but Mrs. Bizby's kind-hearted, motherly way of putting the offer prevailed, and reflecting that Christie and the old days were gone, the wretched child sobbed assent. Poor Joe! fatherless, motherless, helpless in her fast-approaching trouble! The good woman thought of her Irene, and wiped her eyes.

It was indeed high time something should be done for Nick Haverty's daughter. Death had relieved him of his unfulfilled responsibilities, and left her homeless. I wonder if she sorrowed after him. If she did, she gave no sign. It was just a day before she went to her new experience among the orphans, that they found two bloated and discolored corpses, and laying them, loathsome and past recognition, in the bar-room, prepared for hasty burial.

Doppy's grief was heartfelt and bitter. She couldn't bear to lose even the poor shadow of parental love and protection, whose reality every pure impression gained in her upward climb only taught her to reverence the more. But her companion looked stolidly on, neither offering to help or hinder—tearless, wordless. Then she accepted the clumsy kindness of her neighbors, and made herself dead drunk. She lay thus across the doorway when the men brought in the paupers' coffins. They lifted her up so they could enter with their burden, and carried her, still senseless, to the asylum.

But the very thought of Joe among the orphans strikes one with its manifest incongruity. What had Joe in common with those pale, well-washed, gingham-aproned children, that every Sunday walked two and two to church, in procession, and two and two back again, miracles of demure good behavior?—Joe, who

was restless, eager, undisciplined, accostomed to rapid and decisive thought, however narrow might be its limits, and false its principles. As might have been expected, it didn't work well. It was only a system of repression in a new direction. It seemed to her as if she was a garment, rough-dry and scorched on one side, now being forced into flatness on the other. Joe abhorred flatness. Here nothing was otherwise. The milk-and-watery diet was insipid to her palate, accostomed to balance starvation by stimulants. The orderly, bare rooms were a vision of emptiness. The pious little prints on the school-room walls were stupid. The rewards were flavorless. The faces of the children all wore the same expression ; some of them were old as herself, but she tried them, and found no community of conception, emotion, or experience. Their little griefs and piques seemed silly ; their undeveloped judgment and imagination, more childish, because so little in contact with any mature nature, was disgusting to her. A child in years, she was yet a self-reliant woman ; and if the ingraining for life of such rough, distorted ideas as hers be maturity, mature as any woman. She had her own methods of reasoning, and standards of right, wrong, and happiness. The new ones offered to her consideration appeared preposterous, and she rejected them. Her youthful companions in the syllable class jeered at her. The teacher scanned her disgustedly, and made her feel like an alligator. She detested the washings, and combings, and mendings ; laughed skeptically at the Bible-lessons ; parodied the hymns and prayers. She lost no time in teaching her companions to pitch pennies, and gave spirited representations of negro minstrel shows, including the can-can, which, strange perversity of human nature ! they enjoyed. Becoming

vexed subsequently, she knocked them over right and left, like nine-pins, and swore at them ; after which they eyed her with coolly superior disapproval. This cut her to the heart. She had failed to be companion, and tried for admiration. Failing again, she found their contempt unbearable. She dubbed the matron "Old Hag ;" lied to her unblushingly ; carried an imitable insolence of manner by day, and cried herself to sleep under the bed-clothes every night.

It was all pain—all emptiness ; nowhere feeding—nowhere growth ; for the barren acquisition of a few facts, or a little unreliable skill in labor, is not human growth any more than acquisition of age is growth. We have seen dwarfs with white heads. Joe's chances of salvation through regularity, order, cleanliness, education, were fast closing up, as these things grew hateful to her through entire lack of the one love-element that would have made their assimilation possible. Her face, formerly scornful, was now sullen. To the impetuous defiance of old she added active hate ; and, whereas she estimated and acted by a low standard before, simply taking the color of her surroundings, she now nourished her resolve to hold to it, in desperate antagonism to a false position and wretched life, whose morality only presented itself as a hypocrisy or a strait jacket.

All the teachings, and scoldings, and deprivings, meted out by the suffering matron, could not make her other than bold, vulgar, and vicious. As for comfort, no one either knew how or tried to give it, except in a general way. But comfort isn't general ; it's particular ; and not to be administered like Mrs. Squeers's treacle and brimstone.

After running away twice, to be brought back kicking and struggling, she finally effected an escape.

When her baby had been born in the first weeks of asylum life, its fifteen-year-old mother regarded it with unmotherly curiosity. "Yis, its eyes is blue. What'll he say when he sees it, I wonder?" she said, reflectingly, and she let them carry it to the poor-house without comment or objection—never once in her whole stay alluded to its existence. But now, going into a world of strangers, with some instinct of maternity, she lingered about Millville until she was able to steal it, and then was seen walking away with a shawl over her head, and the infant in her arms, no one knew or cared whither.

And no one from that day to the evening when she brought Knox to her garret at Top Town, had been interested enough to ask her past or future. In jail, and on the street, earning her bread by any and all beggars' trades, resting nowhere long, loving no one and nothing, least of all life, she represented naught better than a sapless and withered leaf, blown by the angry wind hither and thither through the muddy streets, at every turn more marred of its rightful verdure, ever under the feet of the crowd, more nearly assimilate to the mire.

CHAPTER V.

THE KNITTING WORK OF FATE.

“Frank and free may he be,
With his face turned to me.”

 OT long after Francis Haythorne's experience of blowing bubbles, he chanced to spend another evening with Mollie and Peace at Fir Covert. Miss Pelican was visiting at Craigenfels, for Uncle Aleo had returned from Mexico just in season to assemble his dear young people, and the said younglings were enacting sundry scenes of tragedy and comedy, as such folks inevitably will, given time and juxtaposition. It was Peace's *role* to play Miss Mad-Cap among the would-be lovers, but she often tired of the sport, and lived an hour of quiet with Mollie. The silence and patience at Fir Covert gave soothing and refreshing in this time of turbulent emotion. Peace was often in need of both. Tonight, however, she obtained neither. Nowadays the mere memory of the Sybarite was sufficient to set her thoughts in a whirl, and his presence was the most pungent of excitements.

There had been notice given out the Sunday previous of an extra prayer-meeting, and Mrs. McCross was just starting thither when Mr. Haythorne appeared. There were diverse opinions of this good lady held among her acquaintance. Peace said she was a dish of bonnyclabber and vitriol ; Francis Haythorne traced a resemblance to homeopathic medicines ; whereas Charley Pelican considered her the incarna-

tion of corky champagne. On the other hand, Mrs. Dr. Perfect averred that she was another Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, who abode in the Temple day and night. Like most great heavenly orbs, Mrs. McCross had a satellite. Mr. Cymbalinus Adolphus Brown filled this office with a thin-legged obsequiousness peculiarly his own. He was as much a part of her equipage as her bonnet, and more useful. He always had some three or four of her appendages in his hand—her fan, vinaigrette, shawl, rubbers, umbrella, and Bible. Millville sneered daily as it beheld them together, Miranda leading the way with saintly dignity just three inches before her sallow neophyte. Mr. Brown carried his head a little in advance of his dapper person, which perhaps gave rise to the popular belief that Mrs. McCross led him by one of his most cherished features. But the wiser ones of the village thought differently. Squire Hitchcock, who had not yet succeeded in marrying off Adeliza Euphemia, even said openly, that a personage who shall be nameless, himself, could secure his attentions if he'd pay his debts.

“Mr. Haythorne,” quoth our good lady, pausing at the parlor door as she spied him, “don’t you feel that it would be for your spiritual uplifting to attend the meeting with us? Mrs. Perfect is to pray for the godless sister who gave her the eighty-dollar china, and now contemplates visiting her. We are each going to pick out some of our Christ-forgetful friends as objects of petition. It has been thought advisable to ask those friends themselves to attend, if mayhap the spirit wrestle once more with them; yea, come again even as did Samuel at the bidding of the Witch of Endor, according to the Book.”

"Which is to be Samuel? and which the Witch?" asked Peace, puzzled.

"That is one of the mysteries incapable of revelation to the carnal mind," responded Mrs. McCross, after a little hesitation. "But the word has reached me to extend you the invitation. It is better to be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

"I'm sorry you draw your line exactly at Fir Cover," said the doctor, politely; "but the fact is, I promised Miss Mollie to spend the evening here."

"Don't give him up so," cried Peace. "Bethink you of the Psalm—

'So I Thy righteous ways,
To sinners will impart;
Whilst my advice shall wicked men
To Thy just laws convert.'

"That is my constant solace," said Mrs. McCross, apparently taking both her visitors in earnest. "'Almost persuaded' is a pitiable condition, young man."

"What does Miss Pelican think?" retorted he, revengefully. "I often tell her so—with reference to a certain subject."

"Miss Peace prefers a different tune, 'Sweet By-and-By,' perhaps," suggested Mr. Brown, in his most disagreeable falsetto.

"Not at all. 'Oh, do not be Discouraged,' is my present hymn."

She was good-tempered, but cool.

"So you refuse offered grace," said their Evangelist, with a sigh. "Well, it was truly written 'Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses.'"

"Am I Jam, or Jan?" queried Peace, reflectively,

as the door closed behind the departing Disciples of Holiness.

“Not only Jam, but Jam tart,” replied the doctor, aggressive for once.

She didn’t answer, because Mrs. McCross’s farewell injunctions to her daughter were painfully audible.

“Father wants you to stop at the drug-store and get him some wine,” said Mollie. “He is asleep now, but the supply is gone, and he will need it before morning at least twice.”

“I shan’t do any such thing,” said her mother, sharply. “That tippler seems to think I’m born to run his errands. It’ll make me late to meeting, and Mollie, I won’t be back before eleven o’clock. Sister Perfect proposes to offer some earthly refreshment after the exercises of the spirit.”

Mollie stood by the door, in silence.

“Are those people going to stay here all the evening?” demanded Mrs. McCross, after a pause. “Yes? Then do try to behave modestly and humbly, if you know how. If Elizur must have wine, go and get it yourself. A little solitary meditation will do him good.”

Apparently, Mollie must have obeyed, for it was some time before she entered the sitting-room, and when she did her breathing was quick and irregular, such as follows a long run.

“Father has gone to sleep for the night,” said she. “He won’t need me before twelve o’clock. Now I can rest a little with you.”

She passed her hand over her aching head as she spoke, and, taking a deep breath, drew her sewing from its basket and addressed herself to her task. She was pale, thin, and worn, but her head hadn’t

learned to bend, nor her courage to falter. She had still endurance for all weights.

Now, one would suppose that the three aliens from holiness would have made common cause, and striven to comfort each other. But alas! there are certain subtle mental electric fluids whose circles, once deranged, will not easily come again into harmony. Mrs. McCross had jarred all out of place. It would take an explosion to restore order.

Mr. Haythorne sat silent and unapproachable by the fire, looking at Doró's "Don Quixote," which seemed to match his ill-humor. Peace had placed herself at the window, so his back was toward her, and was studying the frosty stars. There were two easy chairs, one each side the hearth, and on either side the apartment was a casement. The doctor had twice migrated from the brown seat to the green, and from green again to brown, to bring about a more friendly position, but each time he changed Miss Pelican crossed the room to the opposite lookout, so he gave up. She wasn't angry at all, but it struck her that this course of action would be disagreeable, so she embraced it.

"I am so glad you came this evening, Mr. Haythorne," said Mollie, breaking the silence. "I wanted to speak about the school. Are you sure it will go smoothly? I am afraid there will be a fuss, from what I hear. Wouldn't it be a good idea to talk it over with some of the boys, and win their interest in your plans? It would go a great way toward establishing good order, if three or four could be counted on *a priori*."

In fact, this was excellent advice, but it was a mistake to offer it then and there. Not only was Peace present to excite Francis Haythorne's negative instincts,

but the Sybarite was thoroughly out of equilibrium. He had roused himself from inaction to vigorous work, but his new plan of life had not had time to settle into habit. He felt himself in commotion, and knew to his cost that all he undertook put him at a double warfare—not only with the world, but with his spirit. He fretfully compared his feeling to the earth, teeming under the hot spring sky, which, in angry revolt against winter's enforced repose, puts forth alike weeds and wholesome vegetation. He now experienced a sense of opposition to the plan, and injury from its proposer.

"Then you don't think me man enough for the place," was his lofty comment.

"Not at all," cried Mollie, with painful quickness. "It is only a question of terms; I prefer tact to attack."

"That's a poor alliteration, Mollie." Peace left her astronomical pursuits and took the arm-chair opposite the doctor's. "Say generalship, to general shipwreck. That is much neater." She stuck an Andalusian foot toward the flames, and leaned back with a complacent air that exasperated her vis-a-vis.

"You must have a poor opinion of me if you think I can't manage that rabble at Syllabub," retorted the young man, with haughty contempt. He laid his white hand on his foxy beard, from habit, as he spoke, but the former indolent grace of the motion was replaced by Reynard's quickness.

Now it was Mollie's turn to be offended. Her beloved boys dubbed "rabble" in that tone. She was both angry and hurt. Laying down her work, she looked directly at the young gentleman, and exclaimed: "You make a great mistake if you expect to do any good while acting on that idea. You speak

as if they were machines. I'd say in the same terms, 'I'd like to see the Wheeler & Wilson I couldn't run!' (though, for that matter, would my sewing on it regenerate it?) You will never help any one till you learn that human beings are self-acting things, whose reformation must come from within, not by compulsion. Do you not know that in a republic, not a despotism, is one to look for high types of manhood? Liberty, light, truth—these belong together. Slavery, ignorance, falsehood—these are never separated. And after this, you talk of governing a rabble!"

"Pour it on," said Francis Haythorne, calmly bowing his head to the storm. "They are a rabble—a low-minded, stupid, coarse-fibered, vicious rabble. Since you open the subject, it is a matter of increasing astonishment to me that a *lady*, accustomed to refined society, can put herself in contact with such a sicken-ing mob."

"You are right to wonder," said Mollie, panting with indignation. "After my connection with what you call refined society, I am surprised myself that I should feel any pulse of love in my veins for anything God ever made. I thank heaven for my inborn vulgarity! I warn you that you cannot improve Syl-labub by awing it into silence. No vision of frozen, high-bred refinement will melt hard hearts. It takes hot tears, and sorrow and pity instinct with one's vital warmth. It takes painful endurance, and costly for-givenesses. Through these, and nothing else, does the soul get light and life to begin that fight with itself that ends in true manhood."

"Hush! hush!" said Peace, malevolently. "Why do you spoil his original idea. Put yourself in his place—in *our* place. He has improved on the Chris-tian scheme of regeneration. No carpenter's morals

for him ! As he suggests, it would have been much better received in the first circles, if one day cards engraved at Tiffany's could have been distributed announcing : ' The angel Gabriel, viewing with disgust the lack of delicacy in the manners of the world, will, for a short time, give seances of good breeding at Boston and New York. Mortals are requested not to touch him, as his Phœnix plumes, though now all the rage in heaven, are really too good to wear in this dirty world; and any remarks are strictly prohibited, for human brogue is offensive to the cultured ear, and as refinement increases the stomach grows delicate.' "

" I should like to know your plan," said the Sybarite, tasting the full flavor of Miss Pelican's speech.

" Mine ?" she parted her rose-red lips in a smile as bitter as beautiful. " My plan ! you forget I really do belong to the aristocracy. I am a liquor-dealer's daughter, and heiress of a million. I despise the lower classes. I firmly believe there is a double row of bristles down their backs. I am a flower, a night-blooming cereus, in a jar of alcohol. What could be more exotic than that ?"

" One must save people by love !" cried Mollie, ardently. " There is only one dignity in such work : ' He that would be greatest, let him be servant of all.' In bringing people into righteousness, one has to lay heart to heart. It is not one's place in society ; it is the God place in us that marks the distinction between us and them. No sooner is our convert full of Christ, than we see him our equal, and recognize the fact with joy."

" You talk like a child," cried Francis Haythorne, not caring in his anger how hard he struck. " You disgust me with the very thought of teaching. Can you, a lady, truly say that you think these Paddies

worth as much—of the same nature as yourself? You would have me feed the Dennis pig with truffles. Love them indeed! What appreciation have such cattle for love? It would be a joyful day for America if the whole Irish nation could be annihilated. Judas Iscariot was the first Irishman."

"I will divide my reply into two heads," said Mollie, who, at the extreme of anger, became analytical. "I do consider my scholars of precisely the same nature as myself. I feel with them, as all musical instruments vibrate in unison, though only one be played. I see myself not half so faithful over my ten talents as they are over their one. I respect—more, I reverence them. I am glad you said 'appreciate.' It is 'to set a price, an increasing price upon.' That tells the story. It was the chief priests who appreciated Christ. They paid thirty pieces of silver for Him. His disciples didn't appreciate Him at all (except, as you mention, Judas, who subsequently threw the money away as a false estimate), they only lived and died for Him, and thought it an honor. When you talk of giving help, and then of its being appreciated, I think of that. It is a transaction in trade—nothing more; a bargain between favors and gratitude. The Christ idea is a little dissimilar. His reward was not a kingdom, but a grave; and though He knew it, He didn't turn back. That was the way He saved us." She softened as she thought about the salvation, and her voice trembled. "What Syllabub needs is to be taught to value itself more: to respect itself: to feel that it is, and can be, worthy of praise and love."

"Is she giving you physics, or metaphysics?" asked Peace. "For shame, Mr. Haythorne, to make a wry face over the dose. Besides, you have wounded Mol-

lie in her tenderest spot ; destroyed her peace of mind :—

‘Opium’s force, and, what is more, slack !
Her own oration’s, cannot bring it back.’”

“ I’m afraid that’s true,” said the doctor, who had passed through every shade of disgust during this Phillipic, and at last judged it expedient to fold himself in indolent self-reservation as a defense. “ I’ll complete the quotation :—

‘In short, unless we pity her afflictions,
Despair will make her take her own prescriptions.’”

“ I *do* take my own prescriptions,” said Mollie, exchanging the heat of argument for the sharper pain of personal denial. “ Can you say, Mr. Haythorne, than I ever asked any pain, small or great, of any human being, which I feared to incur myself ?”

She was so eager in her question, in her anxiety she even left her seat, and stood before him, waiting his answer, and the young man knew so well by experience that she would take any adverse reply for a candle whereby to drag to light all possible shortcomings in herself, that, wrathful as he was, he hadn’t the heart to insist.

“ No !” said he, stiffly ; “ you never did.”

Then Mollie’s soul misgave her. She repented speaking her mind, and went back to her seat self-condemned and miserable, and stitched on, without a word. But Peace rallied to the attack. She fixed her black eyes critically on the refined face and graceful figure across the hearth, and seemed to inventory their peculiarities. Then she smiled, satirically, and showed her pearly teeth just a second.

"I should like to see your parents," said she, in conclusion.

"Why?" asked he, with his finger on the page where the lion turned round and settled himself to repose in the presence of the valiant Don Quixote. He had been rustling the leaves as an interlude to the conversation.

"I would like to know if it is your father or mother who has the upper hand now?"

"Neither!" said the philosopher, leaning back in leonine arrogance. "Three people struggle within me—my father, mother, and self; and myself is strong enough to keep the others in subjection."

Even Mollie, cast down as she was, couldn't help smiling at this speech. "Other people find their rebellion in the reverse case," said she, self-consciously. "They are content to subdue themselves."

"In the words of the infant Goethe, 'I am not content with what does for other people,'" suggested malicious Peace.

Francis Haythorne snapped the covers of his book together, and turned at bay. "Since you will have me play the fool, I am at your service," cried he, hotly. "I *do* consider myself vastly the superior of your Syllabub friends. I *do* value my own comfort above that of outsiders. I *will* rule by command, not kisses. I *do* feel perfectly capable of accomplishing what I undertake, and subduing all hindering opponents, whether they are in my own heart or out. I am master, both of myself and my future." Having strengthened his conception of the situation by this review, comprehensive, if vehement, he quietly elevated his foot to an inviting ottoman, and took up his contemptuous consideration of the Knight of Mantua.

It has been noted that Mollie was sewing. Peace, however, was knitting a shawl of black and yellow

split zephyr and Berlin wool, upon a pair of wooden needles. The charm of the work lay chiefly in these huge implements. Half their size would have done as well, but Miss Pelican felt a pleasant complacency, knowing that hers were the biggest in Millville. Just so Arthur exulted in wielding Excalibar, that peerless sword ! and Achilles, the shield Vulcan fashioned for silver-footed Thetis !

The vivid color of the tricotage stood out against Peace's black silk robe, that fitted her superb figure with glove-like nicety ; and it brought out in charming richness the damask of her cheeks. She wore a large yellow rose in her jetty hair, and as she sported with her uncouth needles, now sticking them playfully under her arm, anon drawing them to the front with military precision, and making them keep time with metronomic click, every motion of her lithe frame contrasted with their wooden stiffness.

But soon it appeared that the vindictive, all-devouring monsters had assimilated the last thread of wool.

After a moment's glance at Mollie, patiently stitching beside the argand, the beauty begged the doctor to hold her skein while she wound.

Accordingly, behold the ruler of his destiny with both hands fettered in the aureate band, sitting meekly on a stool before the sorceress. She murmurs no spell to bring him into her power. She is her own spell, as she dexterously slips the loose, gleaming thread from his yielding grasp, and fashions it into a shapely ball. As she bends hither and thither, he sways obedient to her will ; his eyes are fixed on her graceful motions, and because there is nothing so stately fair as an elm, when she stands erect, he likens her to this majestic tree, stirring and rustling its drooping boughs. But as

she approaches him to undo a willful tangle, she unconsciously brings her noble head, with its one odorous rose, close to his breast, and he thinks only of the maiden. Now retreating, smiling and flushed with eagerness, to mold the ball with masterly celerity till it makes a visible golden rhythm in her hand, he sees only a flame-bright cactus, hiding her heart behind a skein of golden-threaded stamens. Then she opens her immense eyes in laughing reproof, as, bewildered in the enchantment, he forgets his part and drops the wool from his idle grasp: no, they are not eyes, but two goblets full of intoxication, which has bewitched him! How easily is she slipping all his thread of life from his grasp to her own, till, folded to handle at her ease, she weave the fabric at her queenly will, and mayhap to pattern he little thinks of!

Ah! lucky philosopher, to find in Peace your Lachesis! How many a noble web in feeble, skill-less fingers has been botched and bungled past all recognition of its rightful beauty!

The winding ended, by unanalyzed exercise of classic association, the doctor betakes himself to playing *Didone Abbandonata* at the piano, and Peace knits on, laughing to herself in happy consciousness of power, and wonders if Ulysses would have sailed away to the Hereafter if Penelope had taught him to hold her colored skeins; and Mollie lays aside her completed task, and goes to wait upon her father, whose sands of life have almost fallen from the glass.

* * * * *

Meantime quite a different scene had been enacting at Syllabub.

Early that evening Doppy Mulligan hastened to

put her kitchen in order. It was not a very large domain, but it had long been the pride of her heart. Her sand-scrubbed floor, white as snow, her spotless curtains, and windows without a stain, her well-rubbed treasures of old mahogany, picked up at Lucky's second-hand shop, her bright pictures that Amos had framed, her gay air-castles and bead-work, done in odds and ends of time,—all were precious possessions gathered one by one, and valued like children, which have each had his turn at playing youngest favorite.

The pets were fed, the china washed and set in tidy order on the dresser shelf, the crumbs from supper carefully collected for the hen. Then Doppy assumed her fine white ruffled apron, and felt complacently 'like a lady.' She was a lovely little housekeeper—this pet of Mollie's. Her brown eyes, and heavy brown curls, and plump shoulders, and kitten-like grace, were enhanced by her exquisite neatness of surrounding and attire. Doppy loved calico dresses, and she made and wore them with elegance. She studied soft and neutral tints for herself, with a little dash of sunshiny brightness, just as she loved to tease Amos by the hour, but always gave him a sweet word at parting. Nor did she reason differently about her house. "Dirt color is the natural hue of poverty," said she, "and at the circus one sees red and yellow. But that's not the way God made the world outside. There, everything shades off into everything else, and yet all is cheerful. It is as Miss Mollie explained about the keys in music, each one has a tone, and a chord founded on that, and all the tune is full of its own chord, and harmony. Everything pretty is a tune played on colors, and the tone that the picture is made on must be in all that's in it, or it looks coarse, and jangles."

But Doppy's cool walls and warm trimmings were

quite veiled in twilight by the time her toilet was complete. The large white winter moon streamed full through the open shutters. In the comfort of fire and home's soft shelter, Doppy could waste a pleasant sigh at its chilly splendor ;—

— “pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing upon earth,
Wandering companionless.”

“Surely,” thought this youthful astrologer, “no one can feel more forlorn than she. If there could be two moons now, one me an’ one Amos, what a nice walk we’d take of a fair night. We’d go slow an’ majestic through the black sky, an’ make believe we didn’t think much of it, but when we came to a pond or a still river, shining below, we’d peer down an’ look at the fine picture we’d be together, as they’d reflect us.” Doppy paused to laugh merrily at the conceit, and stiffly nodded her little head, in illustration of lunar dignity. Then an old rhyme her mother had brought from Ireland came into her mind, and she clasped her hands and made haste to repeat it :

“New moon, new moon, frank and free,
Grant me this night my true love to see.
If his clothing I may wear,
If his children I may bear;
Frank and free may he be
With his face turned to me.”

As she stood gazing from the frame of the great square casement, into the snow-bound garden, she beheld the world at its fairest. All the familiar objects without made silhouettes against the intense brilliancy of round-faced Diana. Doppy had indeed

crossed the domain of Fairie with her elfin rhyme, and relegated the workaday world into spellful mystery. So she staid, dreaming not of the illy-idealized true love, but poetizing—the old necromancer of a pump beneath his cowl of snow, with sleeve of icy tatters which seemed to cover a threatening hand—the neighbor's sign swinging slowly in the breeze, a somber banner outstretched by a muffled giant arm—the sentinel shadow of the portrait of Soloman Rodgers himself traveling slowly back and forth before the door, as the portly original had doubtless really done in the Revolutionary war—and who knows if this wasn't his uneasy ghost? Odd faces grinned and menaced in the familiar groupings of the bushes, and weird, cloudy figures glided distorted or majestic through the sky. The earth was one magic mirror of the supernatural, that dwells not in it, but the busy human brain inheriting these two worlds.

At last, however, withdrawing her brown eyes from the fascinating unreality, Doppy became aware of a very real glance seeking her own; a glance, too, whose scrutiny was not only intent, but eager. A tall, large-framed youth, clad in laborer's dress, coarse, but clean and whole, was leaning against the house, studying its interior, and herself, the plainest to be seen of its contents. It was not often that one found Miss Mulligan's bright eyes softened in dreamy romance; or that dimpled cheek, now pressed against the pane, with all its thoughtful curves visible; or those busy little hands folded gently in silent repose. To tell the truth, Doppy was the incomprehensible sprite of one young brain; the inconsequent, delicious dream—the dainty wonder—the lovely revelation of womanhood that filled with awe, perplexity and tenderness one heart, whose simple homage was both manly and proud.

“Frank and free, with his face turned to me,” had the couplet said. If this was the answer, it was so far a true one, for single-mindedness was written all over the watcher’s features, from the broad, high forehead, lighted with steady gray eyes beneath black brows, to the squarely-turned chin, with just a trace of the merry Irish dimple to add geniality to purpose.

But Doppy had by this clean forgottén the rhyme. Why should she connect moon charms with that kindly face? Anxiety about its wearer was more cogent. Running to the door, she threw it wide open, and seized the young fellow by the ar'n.

“Amos! Amos Daley, is it wild ye are, leanin’ agin the cauld house in the snow, an’ you wid a cramp not three weeks since? Come in this minute. I’ll have to sit at your wake, an’ you’re not kairful.”

“Oh, ye see me at last,” said he, yielding willingly to the pressure. “I said to myself, ‘Now, I can throw an eye on her as she truly is, and not dressed out wid company airs.’ Whisper; is this the way you say your rosary?”

Having been impelled backward through the dark kitchen to the rocking-chair, Master Amos paused before assuming its comforts, till Doppy had struck a light, so she could see him match his fingers piously, and blink his handsome eyes toward the ceiling. Doppy’s lamp was a large one, and it had a bright little shade, which threw a rosy coloring over all the room, but the flush on Miss Mulligan’s cheek, and the warning gleam in her glance were borrowed from neither. She straightened her plump shoulders with a pretty shrug, and leaned against the mantel-shelf, her hands occupied with a sweet-pea lighter she had taken from the vase.

"Cairtainly ; and would you like me to repeat the words I said ? I'll give you my confidence," responded she, dryly.

"To be sure."—Amos judged it expedient to ameliorate the situation.—"Why, Doppy, it's the holy thoughts of you that run like beads all through my day. I tell a nun's rosary on them every hour."

The saint stuck up her little chin, willfully, and put her tissue paper back with the others with provoking deliberation. Then she clasped her hands behind her as if she were saying a lesson, and declaimed with emphasis :—

"' Purty sweet moon, shine down brightly
On that foine by I think about nightly;
Bless his four bones, an' keep his heart true,
An' to point him out plain, his name it is Hugh.'"

"Ugh !" echoed Amos, with a disgusted sniff, "you're turned poet, I see ; I'll have to tell the hero of your lines."

"If you do, I'll never privilege you to know no more of my feelin's," said Doppy, with dignified reproof,—in her heart, gratified at the success of her improvisation. It was sweet to tease Amos. He had a way of opening his mouth and gasping and finally saying nothing at such times, delightful to see. Doppy was proud of Master Daley, as the result of long and faithful training. "He was," she was wont to exclaim, "a good quite by, an' one that could be dark too if he willed." By this she meant reticent, a peculiarity not always commendable, as she now learned. He leaned back solemnly in his chair, and sat eying her, and cogitating what this sudden change could

portend. Too loyal to say with Keats, "flippant, vain, inconstant, childish, proud and full of fancies," he laid her lightest word to heart, and sat slowly revolving his faults and her pettishness in dead silence.

Doppy grew uneasy after a little, and, dropping into a seat, called up the cat and dog, and first fondled and then set them at her abstracted *vis à vis*. The house contained a happy family of pets. Amos told Mollie that Miss Mulligan always had something a risin' on it up, far from dreaming that he was mentally placed at the top of the list.

However, the little pleasantry, or the coaxing face with which it was offered, dissipated his gloom. He elevated puss to his knee, and caressed her gently, while, waiving the question of the orisons, he announced a bit of news. "That Haythorne," said he, "is comin' down to learn us at night school."

No sooner was Amos placated than Miss Doppy longed to twang the readily-resounding string again, "An' do you mean it?" said she, eagerly. "Answer true now, is Hughy Dinnis goin'?"

"I ain't his policeman," said Amos, sourly, "belike he may."

"Well, I was thinkin' he might," replied Doppy, with a coy little sigh, feeling the hem of her apron ruffle, and looking down; then, with sudden vivacity, "You'll go, of course, Amos? I admire edication in men. It weakens their vanity like, just as water improves limmons for drink."

The young man's black brows' met in an ominous contraction—Doppy rejoiced in his annoyance. There are women who have so little faith in their worthiness of affection that they dare not show any lover their hearts. "Pursuit," say they, "is our only lure, and let

the excitement of the chase never give place to careless indifference of the safely-snared game." Bittersweet is their shields' sole device. Doppy was such a maiden. If Atmos had cared to study her by moonlight he should now learn that she wasn't his lesson book.

"Ye didn't see Hughy on the corners, did ye?" persisted she.

"I'll put a head on him if ye say another word," cried Amos, jumping up. "Or I'll go down and send him here to keep ye company, 'stead o' me."

"Be aizy," said Doppy, remorsefully, and she put aside the pets, and going to stand by him, as he leaned against the door, she turned toward him a face sweet and entreating. "I was only plaguin' ye. O dear! I b'lieve they've gone and come now, just to pay me, when we were getting ready to have a good time by ourselves, Amos."

Some one knocked as she spoke, and she admitted Hugh Dennis and Aleck Heffron, who entered arm in arm, and hung their hats on two hooks neatly put up for the purpose. Doppy adored order. Neither of the new-comers had Amos's grave dignity, or sturdy manhood, but both were handsomer, and more graceful. Hugh, indeed, was a rare study of bright coloring. No blue-bird's breast was bluer than his eyes, no beaver fur browner than his soft locks, no apple blossoms ever bloomed whiter than his forehead and pinker than his ripe cheeks, and his ever-smiling mouth parted to make dimples lurk at either corner, and show a row of teeth white and regular as strawberry petals. Aleck, on the other hand, belonged to the northern Irish in coloring, and the southern in disposition. He was dark-haired, dark-eyed and very slender; uneasy, undisciplined, uncertain, and yet sincere and faithful

enough to have kept the friendship of the trio since early boyhood. He was dressed with considerable smartness in the way of bosom studs, and wristbands, and carried a crush hat and cane, vanities at which Hugh and Amos laughed much. Indeed, Hugh's only weakness of the kind was a blue necktie that just matched his eyes, and Amos eschewed even this, and always scrupulously attired himself in black.

Doppy received the young men cordially ; in fact, either by accident or design her greeting to Hugh was very warm, and after she had found them chairs she brought her own close to Mr. Dennis's, and, to Master Daley's manifest uneasiness, favored him with attention very nearly exclusive.

"We've just picked up a new step at Hannah Groggins', volunteered Aleck, placing himself behind Amos so as to jerk out a hair that happened to be standing straight up from his friend's black mane. "Dennis is always throwing it up at me that I can't dance but fifteen, when he can only shake his feet half as often as I."

Doppy, sitting opposite, was not too much occupied with Hugh to fail to see the victim of the theft wince, and prepared to cancel the debt at her leisure. She had a way of fighting Amos's battles. But to all appearance she only bestowed a radiant glance on the merry face at her side, and said, with a little coquettish drawl that meant a thousand things at once, "*Now, Mr. Dennis !*"

"He can't say a word," insisted Aleck, extracting a second hair, while Amos intercepted another beaming look under which Hugh brightened like a tulip in the sunshine. "He knows when he's well off. I don't believe he dares try with you," he exclaimed, achiev-

ing by this stroke of diplomacy the rearrangement of the party. "Why, I'd love to furnish the music."

"Oh, I'd like nothing better than to play for Hughy," cried Doppy, detecting his plan, and trumping his ace. She produced a Jew's harp as she spoke, and after a preliminary twang proceeded to perform the requisite air with some skill, while Amos listened, wearing an air of critical satisfaction.

Aleck secured the third of his hirsute prizes, as he prepared to take his place on the floor, and Mr. Daley, who had been getting restless under the infliction, caught the mischief-working fingers in his muscular grasp. When he discovered the source of his annoyance his features broke into an indulgent smile, and he silently shook his head at his friend in gentle rebuke, and held his capture fast a second. But Doppy frowned. "There ! ye know ye've a soft thing in 'im, so ye do," cried she, indignantly ; then recollecting herself, "When did Mr. Dennis ever do so ? Take a pattern by him, that's not only merry but harmless." She was so busy watching the effect of her words on Amos that she didn't see the bright light she was calling into Hugh's blue eyes, or mark the elation with which he stepped toward Aleck, already executing defiant flings and shuffles. But Amos was less blind.

What a pretty thing is a double clog dance ! It's not the inspiration of grace or beauty ; not the story of pastoral love ; warmed by no lingering flavor of gypsy wandering, or coquetry, or kisses ; but the natural free expression of health, overflowing spirits and nimbleness of limb ;—an out-and-out music-making with the feet, every note marked with a boot tap, and every group of postures concluded with a refrain. Hugh and Aleck knew heel and toe steps, fling steps

hornpipe steps, shuffle steps, and one magnificent flight of genius composed of kicks, cuts and capers, superb to view.

Doppy had turned quite away from her vexed swain as she played, and given the dancers her enthusiastic attention. She was so pleased to see the genuine discomfort her freak could cause that she resolved to devote the evening to working up the effect.

Never had she been so gayly eager, so beautifully flushed and coquettish. Amos didn't lose a single toss of her curls, or sparkle of her eye. Like a pet canary, his pretty bird had eluded him, and now, perched out of reach upon the nearest tree, ruffled her feathers and trilled a tantalizing lay. But he would not be annoyed. He could afford to share her attentions with his own true friends, so when they finished he gave his cordial approval of their feats, and even pronounced Hugh the victor. "And Doppy's gained most wonderful on the harp," continued he. "She'll soon beat her teacher. Give it here till I play the railroad train."

This was Amos's best accomplishment, but though in her heart Miss Mulligan was prouder of it than he, she now feigned to have lost all interest, and in the midst of the most difficult passage laughed aloud at a little by-play in the Deaf and Dumb Alphabet she had inaugurated with Hugh. Nevertheless Amos played steadily through. He selected his tune, rendered it, and then the locomotive started, the engine puffed, the bells rang. All in motion the train darted on in even time along the level path, soon to enter a defile between high rocks, anon a tunnel, finally a bridge: next the companion train whizzed by, brakes were applied, and a stop effected. When the train passed through the gap, the player softened his strain to a

whisper; and Doppy exclaimed: "That's the sleeping car."

"Did ye ever see the like o' that now," said Hugh, ceasing his tricks with Doppy to return the admiration lately received. "I'd go to California on that train quick as a wink. Wouldn't you, Doppy?"

"No, I'd be afeard," said she, demurely casting down her eyes, and allowing one aggravating dimple to lurk in the cheek exposed to Amos's view. "I'd rather go to Top Town on the bones with Aleck."

The despised minstrel hardly knew which irritated him most, Hugh's face, ruddy with pleasure, like a harvest moon, or that treacherous dimple. He put the Jew's harp gloomily on the table, and stood leaning against the mantel-piece to listen to the rival performance.

"Well, whistle the air you want," said Aleck, producing his clackers, and seating himself amiably.

"I should think a steam man ought to do his own whistling," replied Amos, alluding to Aleck's boyish nickname.

"Shame," cried Doppy severely. "Haven't we made it up to go back on them names. We'll call him by his own, the Godly Man of the Alley; won't we, Hughy."

Thus reproved Amos grew glummer still, and scarcely noticed how Aleck mounted his Rosinante after a few facetious plunges and kicks from the unruly steed, then being fairly atop, ambled, ran, trotted, galloped, over plank road, mud road, macadamized road, and bridges, to bolt at last and make shipwreck of all things.

"They're a pair of 'em!" said Hugh, just a shade of patronage lurking in his manner. "Now if Doppy'd only play, 'Let the dead and the beautiful rest,' on the

concertina, while I sing, every fellow'd have did his share."

"With the greatest pleasure in life, and then we'll have limmonade," answered Doppy, hastening to get the instrument, while Mr. Dennis, who was very proud of his voice, coughed a little in preparation, and Amos, watching his swelling chest, and smiling satisfaction, longed to punch him for being such a fool.

"Now boys, see here! Ain't them foine? Miss McCross and I made 'em." The music having been completed, Hugh was concocting the beverage of the evening, and Doppy was bringing some dainty sugared cookies from the dresser, as she spoke. "I can always do it again, hereafter. It's one cup of butter, two of sugar, five tablespoonsful of milk, well beaten, as also two eggs. An' I believe there's reasons to taste in the recipe."

"Of course there's reasons to taste if you made 'em," said Amos, always loyal; he was resolved on one last attempt to stem the current. "O Doppy, what a wonner you be!"

"I didn't mean that, now," the young lady denied, blushing, and shaking her head reprovingly. If Amos hadn't liked her work it would have been stale and unprofitable to her. But she turned her face that he might not detect her gratification, and explained in a cold voice, "It was Malaga reasons in the book, nicely stoned and chopped."

"His idee wa'n't so bad," suggested Aleck, applying himself to the delicacies with gusto, "what's the charge for refreshments?" Amos's face fell as Doppy rejected his compliment; he stood silently by the mantel looking at the trio, his cookey untasted in his hand. His glance darkened more and more as he watched them, and his chin rose squarely and firmly to meet an

upper lip whose lines betrayed as much will as temper.

"The honor my friends do me, when they eat 'em," said Doppy, pointedly tossing her head. Amos never moved his questioning gaze from her saucy face. She turned her back on him, and offered to divide the last mug of lemonade with Hugh, who was talking eagerly.

"He's lost his manners all along o' his boss," he was saying. "Every pay night the old Yankee skinflint asks him to take a drink, and then cuts both glasses off the wages."

"I'd put it down," said Doppy, examining Amos through the corner of her eye, and thinking perhaps she'd gone far enough.

"Well, the men do rather kick agin it," acknowledged Aleck. "But times are hard, we must work, we ain't altogether free in a free country, you know." Amos had finished his scrutiny of the situation, and accepted Miss Mulligan's position. He would bear endlessly with her whims, but he would enter no lists with Hugh. He put the endeavor by quietly, and addressed his mates.

"I wish it wasn't the fact," said he in his deep, steady voice. "As Miss McCross says, it's only such virtues as carefulness an' temperance and industry that give us power to call ourselves our own men."

"And too much knowledge of the ways of coquettes', he's thinking," suspected Doppy, studying his grave face.

"An' dancin' and an occasional drunk to make us feel our spirits," added Aleck, to be contrary. It was his normal condition.

"Devil's spirit you mane!" said Doppy, a little off her poise.

"No, I don't," Aleck knew that to attack temperance was to stir Miss Mulligan's tenderest feelings. He was willing to have a hand in brewing the tempest. "Sure a sober man is but half a man, all the world knows."

"And a drunkard is no man at all," retorted Hugh, springing eagerly to Doppy's aid.

Amos all at once gave up being calm. He was a bear attacked by bees; but the first blow of his paw was heavy.

"That's not what Mary Ann Heffron says. One evening not long since half the fellows were paralyzed, and she told hers she liked a man not to be afraid of a glass." Amos said this because he felt bitter, but he didn't expect Miss Heffron's name to make Doppy so angry.

"He'll fling that horrid thing in my face, will he?" thought she, feeling her heart beat furiously with wrath.

"All the girls think so," answered Aleck, defending his sister. "They don't respect any body that's too stingy to spend a cent for beer."

"I despise a man that drinks," cried Doppy, energetically, "and a woman who tempts him is below contempt." This provoked Master Heffron, who thus was stabbed twice.

"Yes, Amos," said Hugh, with offensive benevolence, "you think you know a good deal, don't you? But the fact is you don't."

Amos didn't speak, but Aleck persisted. "Why, even your pink of perfection, Haythorne, drinks; I've seen him take lager many's the time."

Unwittingly this speech of Mr. Heffron's defined the place of battle. Transferred from personal and family grounds to the wider arena of a common interest,

each felt free to indulge the anger that the evening's amusement had awakened.

"He's a nice gentleman. You'd all three do well to take example by him; yes, I mean you as well as any!" Doppy was too much out of temper to exclude her champion, and flung her retort at Hugh with added venom. Was not he the main cause of all her troubles?

The three young men instinctively approached each other; that is, Hugh and Aleck crept toward Amos, who answered first, with quiet scorn:—

"You're right, Doppy; he *is* lady-like."

"He's so high-toned he forgets we're men," cried Hugh, hotly, released by his lady's petulance from any obligation to conceal his feelings; indeed, as much wounded as astonished at his repulse.

"He's alas! with a delicut air," chimed Aleck. "If he comes down here to teach night-school, as they say, we'll find out what's in him before he gets through. I'd like to roll him in the snow, and see how he looks when he comes up."

"Perhaps we will if he puts on too much."

Hugh was now much more aggravated than Amos; Doppy's hurt to him was a smart, but to her lover an ache.

The little girl saw too late that she had wrecked the night-school, and flung by her one chance to help Miss McCross. She stood ruffling and fretting like an angry bantam opposite the indignant trio. She was handsomer now than ever; her curls were tossed back, her hands locked in angry embrace, her eyes swelling with quite another fire than coquetry. She was confronted, too, by people whose erect heads and firmly-planted feet betrayed will in its most stubborn form. Every pose of the four, from Amos's massive dignity

to slender Aleck's nervous vivacity, was grace itself. But none of them thought of appearances now.

"You don't know how to treat a gentleman," cried Doppy, indignantly.

This was the finishing touch. Nothing could undo the mischief now.

"Bah! you disgust me with the very thought of studying under him," exclaimed Amos, with impetuous anger. "He's a doll, and he'll get a doll's fate; have his head broke."

Hugh was flushing with excitement.

"It wouldn't be bad to tumble him like a snowball," said Amos, laughing. "He's just soft enough to stick well. We've scared many a molly coddle. Do yeas remember that Cymbalinus Brown that figured in *Patience of Hope*? We made a little pastime of a fight once in his class, just to show him we were up to it, and he didn't come again. My nose was bunged up for a week after, but it paid." He was slipping more and more from his noblest self to his worst. Doppy had played Delilah, and cut off his strength. "An't other fellow we frightened. I forget his name. He was allus for hitting his scholars; so, one day, we each fetched a great stick into the class, and didn't say nothin' but hefted 'em, and passed 'em round. Every once in a while we brought 'em for'ard and felt of 'em, an' looked at him. He kept gittin' oneasy like, an' after school let out, golly! how he did dust! That was the last of him."

"If there's no night-school, your chance at arithmetic is quite lost," hazarded Doppy. "Ain't you men enough to be up to his manners? Some folks don't seem to have any man in them."

"We'll see if Haythorne has," said Aleck, looking wicked. "I'll just go an' talk it up among the fellows.

Come on, Hughey. If Miss McCross 'd only stay away ! She'll spoil all the sport."

"You're fixin' to spoil hers," cried Doppy. "There's no difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee, Amos." Doppy snatched in the start her weakest weapon. "Despise him, but get his education."

"Come on !" shouted his friends, already departing on their errand of mischief.

"I'll go wid the boys, since you don't count me a gentleman," said Amos, pausing at the door. Angry and out of heart as he was he couldn't bear to leave his sweetheart so, and forgetful of his provocation he waited with his hand on the lock. But Doppy was too much vexed to conciliate. "Then why don't you start," cried she, rudely, "don't multiply words." Amos accordingly slammed the door behind him, and Doppy stayed her sobs to hear the sharp echoes of his steps along the pavement, and then betook herself to the luxury of tears.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE SAME UNRAVELED.

Said the Pieman to Simple Simon,

"Show me first your penny."

Said Simple Simon to the Pieman,

"Indeed I haven't any."



PON first reading this pregnant rhyme, Doppy had looked up at Miss McCross, and exclaimed sagely, "An' sure, Miss Mollie, ef he could have no pie, he anyways got in a pickle for nothin'." The latter indigestible dainty

seemed the fare Syllabub was likely to offer Francis Haythorne.

When people hate each other's vices there is still a possibility of making common cause on the higher footing of virtues or acquirements. But when they despise or undervalue each other's *culture*, little hope of a good understanding remains. This was the attitude of the Sybarite and his future scholars. True, the red-haired had mis-stated himself in the heat of the argument. His secret soul knew some tenderness for Syllabub, or rather the mission school, Patience of Hope, which was all he ever saw of it. There he had first met Peace ; and within its dingy walls the splendor of her beauty had seemed to him like that of a palm-tree in the desert.

He intended to do his work in the night-school well ; though he had an inkling that it would not be easy. But far more than the wish to benefit the "savages" weighed his resolve to discomfit Miss Pelican, who expected his defeat. Howbeit, in the matter of prejudices, he was much more in sympathy with her than was Mollie. Peace secretly echoed every groan of disgust that he uttered. But she too had a mind to play Delilah to her Samson, and set him grinding in a prison-house. Privately she thought Patience of Hope a good substitute for the Halls of the Philistines.

The young man could have been seen the next Monday night after his tilt with his friends, sitting in calm, albeit hardly complacent, preparation for his labors. He had come in from his professional rounds a few minutes before, and snatched the five or ten seconds of waiting for tea to get on a page or so in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It lay on the nearest chair with a pretty book-mark in it to keep the place.

His case of surgical instruments contested possession of the same seat, and hinted at the afternoon's experiences, as did a certain pallor of cheek and lip, plainly the result of painful excitement. The young doctor had too recently begun his career to be able to witness physical agony unmoved. He was conscientious also ; and rarely sought his pillow without having given hours of careful study to the cases brought under his care, though he had been neither a lazy nor a superficial student of his art. He had spent all his life in the pursuit of knowledge, but the ignoring of responsibility. Now, however, responsibility had snared him, and there was no escape, and no leniency.

His room to a careful eye betrayed the revolution going on in his habits. His nargileh, companion of hours of dreamy reflection, stood coiled up and forgotten in the corner, while his overcoat pocket was crammed with little cigars, just large enough to last through a hasty walk from the house of one patient to the next. His books were in orderly and suggestive array upon the table ; but medical journals and French and German treatises jostled Goethe and Carlyle, and Heine was obliterated by the freshest volume of Anatomy. The open piano gave sign of the same overturn. *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Bach's *Wohltemperirt Clavichord*, and Moscheles' *Studies* were wide open on the rack, while Schubert, Chopin and Mendelssohn languished forgotten on the shelf.

The very shoes in the embroidered shoe bag on the wall had changed character. Dainty ties and thin-soled patent leathers hung like malefactors, and evening slippers and stout, water-tight boots had the floor. Nor was the doctor more than half conscious of the change that had befallen him. He was like a knight of olden time who had thrown aside his robe of peace,

with its fury lining and silken embroidery, for his coat of steel-linked mail, nor dreamed that the time might never come when the din of the battle-field would yield him again to gentle dalliance with his lute. Life had not changed its aspect to him, nor had his own to his associates. The books and music, and rings of comfortable smoke (incense of a meditative soul) ascending from his lips had the same outward air, nor had he lost his mien of studious and philosophic repose in their discussion. Not for one moment did he permit his shield of complacent calmness to offer his breast unguarded to the darts of fortune. He was like the new vintage, which, in its long repose, and ripening on the golden-brown vines, might seem to the passer-by destined alike for raisins or wine. But when its grapes have been pressed and set to ferment, the question turns not upon mild dried fruit and liquor, but vinegar and alcohol.

Patience of Hope did not bedeck itself with rosy hues in his imagination. He was quite aware that Mollie's fears were well-founded. It was late in the season to begin the school in the first place. This arose from his predecessor's having thrown up the task in disgust, and a total inability to supply his place resultant therefrom. Mr. Haythorne was not ignorant that he was unpopular in Syllabub, but he made the mistake of attributing their scant liking to his virtues instead of his vices.

"Brute force and brutal manners are all those coarse creatures are capable of understanding," thought he. "To be intelligible to them I must degrade myself; go down to their level."

"Effeminate dandy. To be after his kind we must give up all our manhood, and our pride, and our thoughts, and talk out of a book the whole time. He

never seems to have any reason of his own. None of them edicated Yankees ever do. Thoughts aren't thoughts to them, if they haven't seem 'em in print," argued Syllabub. "Shall we trade our vigor for his delicacy, which we think is just lack of energy? Not if we know it."

The pretty pendule on the mantel tinkled the half hour. Francis Haythorne rang, and sent back the tray of modest supper he had just discussed, lit a cigar, and set a bit of Schumann on the piano. Then he shook his head, and laid the book aside for Tausig. As he practiced, slowly and carefully at first, gradually working up his fingers to the ideal rate of speed, he grew inwardly rested and tranquil. By the time the clock struck seven, he felt that not Syllabub at its worst could shake his serenity. As he shut the piano, as if by habit, his eyes sought an ivory-type open upon the shelf, at the opposite end of the room. "You will not triumph yet, Peace," thought he, answering the expression he fancied the portrait wore. But the mocking smile seemed a denial of his assertion, just as his ideal of Peace implied active opposition at every point. He gazed a full minute at the

"—Eyes black as death, their lashes the same hue,
Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
Deepest attraction; for when to the view
Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
'Tis as the snake late coiled, who pours his length
And hurls at once his venom and his strength."

And the end of his meditation was that he repeated these same lines, with a self-questioning inflection. He could play with abstract reason, and nicely weigh the differences of ego and non-ego, of objective and

subjective knowledge ; but what one incoherent womanhood was to him, and he enspelled by it to his natural self, his philosophy was too dazzled to see, too coarse to weigh, too weak to control. He only knew that whether she tantalized and contradicted or in rare moments showed him the delicious pleasure of receiving her confidence and refreshing his strength, she was to his soul like the moon and the sun to the sea, which continually draw its waves after themselves.

But he flattered himself if Peace caused the tide in his life, it was only a tranquil motion. How loyally indeed does ocean yield his every atom to the aforesaid attraction ; but how tiny seems the variation made thereby.

Francis Haythorne turned from the picture with grave serenity, and made his preparations for departure at leisure and without serious doubts of the night's success. He took a slate, some writing materials and a package of First Readers from the table, lit a lantern and began his decent into Syllabub.

Mollie McCross met him as he turned down Goncusset street ; she was equipped for the same errand, and held a branch of scarlet cactus in her hand which she presented to him with Peace's compliments. Perhaps by accident the capricious donor had neglected to remove the spines that armed her gorgeous gift, and the doctor was made aware of the sting and beauty at the same moment, just as she was wont to do by him in all their relations.

He said nothing to Mollie as they went swiftly along the snowy path, which was quite narrow, dark, and uncared-for enough to be dangerous. She on her side had resolved to offer neither counsel nor other assistance in the battle before them. She knew the value of her weapons, but since they had been declined

she meant the Sybarite should prove the temper of his own. Mollie had studied mission teaching like any other profession, and mastered its subtleties, and had pride as well as devotion about it.

The room dedicated to the night-school was long, low, dirty and chilly. It had once been papered, but dampness or poor workmanship had permitted the hangings to slip from the plastering, and from a canopy above the teacher's desk. There were brackets of kerosene lamps along the wall, and the furniture consisted of benches and desks, the remains apparently of district school properties.

Mollie took the key from her pocket, and opened the door. She had the lights burning and the fire mended before her leisurely companion hung up his coat. Then she got out the writing books and filled certain dusty ink-bottles from a tin can whose contents had been economically manufactured by herself. Even the fair business-hand copies set for the evening's task were her work, completed after twelve o'clock the night previous. Mollie was another person in Syllabub from the self-restrained, noiseless nurse who tended Deacon McCross at Fir Covert. She was so unobtrusive at home or among strangers that she seemed often fairly colorless; she neither turned the current of human life or was moved by it. But among her boys the case altered. She was bright in look, alert, aglow with sympathy. She held all the people in her proximity by her force of will and enthusiasm. She did not concentrate attention, she pervaded it. She was altered in her very carriage; her small head with its brown tresses poised itself erect and commanding; her expanded chest drank in the air deeply, as if she had suddenly increased her vital power. She was dressed beautifully—not expensively, but daintily—in

blue merino with a vest of black velvet, and embroidered white muslin ruffles at neck and wrists ; her skirts fell in rich folds, and were tucked up in a tidy knot behind, for the floor was dusty. Even her hair was crowned with beauty : a lovely white camellia shone among its thick braids. Peace had sent it from Craig-enfels with Francis Haythorne's cactus.

There was something very provoking to the Sybarite in Mollie's whole appearance, fresh and delicate as it was ; and that massive flower that she wore so haughtily (Mollie was haughty in her way), possessed an irritating power as potent as inexplicable. "All this for the rabble," muttered he, as he betook himself to sorting musty spelling-books. "She has the least sense of her own value of any crack-brained, infatuated fool I ever met." At this moment the object of his disgust flitted down the aisle, her tasks concluded, and, aware of his mood, laughed merrily and kissed her hand to him. Mollie actually had forgotten to be staid and dignified ; she settled on her chair like a bluebird on a May bush. The doctor groaned.

A moment after a rush was made up the outside steps, succeeded by a grand shout as one of the boys was triumphantly dragged back, while a clog dance was performed with spirit, and Barney O'Hara chanted, not unmusically :

"And while we are devils far from Hell,
We'll watch and fight and prey,
We'll frequent Jack's saloon, and dead-beat if we can,
An' get drunk to the break of day."

"An' how are ye now, Hughy, boy. Didn't I tell ye we'd put a head on ye if ye presisted in them folis idees of interferen ?" exclaimed some one else.

“Jest let me lay a hand on ye, Aleck Heffron, what’s allus interpolatin’ yerself,” retorted the defeated contestant ; then, with a rapid change of tone, “Where’s Amos, Miss Doppy ?”

“He’s not spoken to me since the other night. I met him a bit back, but our retreat is as solid as ever,” replied that young lady, not very amiably.

“Why don’t ye mind your mother’s varse, Hugh Dennis ?

“‘For learnin’ is the only thing
That made poor Pepin’s son a king.’”

“King o’ the Cannibal Islands !” quoth Aleck.

“I don’t care for no kings. I’m a democrat and an Irishman. Faix ‘n’ ain’t I from County Connaught, God knows,” said Hugh in a taunting tone.

“Sure, I’m from Clare, God help me,” retorted Aleck, with equally insulting inflection.

The repetition of the salutations of each other’s ancestral counties was the signal for another scuffle, in the midst whereof Doppy opened the door that the defendants had braced themselves against, and thereby sent them tumbling backwards heels over head. At the same moment half a dozen sturdy fellows aimed at them the pile of snowballs they had been some time molding, with great effect.

“What are you doing that for, devil take you ?” cried Hugh, jumping up angrily, and shielding his face from the fire with his arm.

“Is he the only friend ye’ve left, that ye call on him,” quoth Peter Hennessy, fetching a mighty throw at him.

“No, he’s not ; but I don’t see the use of keeping a devil if he lets you slip,” was the wrathful rejoinder.

"That's just what I say," said Mr. Hennessy calmly, saying the most unpleasant thing he could before Francis Haythorne, who was supposed to uphold temperance. "I keep keg of lager instead. Tastes differ."

The speaker, a stout young blacksmith, came into the room as he spoke, followed by Doppy, who looked vivacious but ill at ease.

"How like omagawns you act," cried Amos Daley, striding in, and proceeding to part the leaders of the fray, who were rolling over and over in a wrestling match on the floor. "I wouldn't be found dead acting as you do." With which rebuke he stalked off to his seat, and glowered at them.

The youngsters picked themselves up, and gathering the plentiful snow-balls scattered about, flung them all at little Doppy, who had taken the desk across the aisle from Amos. She threw them back with good aim and will, and a general scramble among all parties ensued, some dodging between benches, some hiding behind the door, a few wriggling into an empty closet.

Amos sat unmoved in the midst of the disturbance, his gray eyes, and mouth already darkened by his downy mustache, perfectly solemn and resolved. He didn't even join in the shout that arose when a missile Hugh intended for Miss Mulligan came full on Mollie's shoulder, and was laughingly caught and confiscated.

Mr. Daley had not followed his friends on their mischievous errand when he parted from Doppy. He went home, and spent the rest of the evening splitting his mother's kindling-wood ; then, thoroughly weary, had snuffed out his tallow candle and his disquietude at once. Since that time, he had avoided all the group, and to that end worked every night. He could

be angry at Doppy, but he wouldn't injure Miss McCross.

There was a momentary lull after Mollie's mishap, and Francis Haythorne, who hadn't stirred from his dignified retirement behind the teacher's desk, now deemed the opportunity come to call his scholars to order. But he had already made one mistake. All the malcontents had overheard him tell Miss McCross, in answer to a remark about the small attendance, "Yes, but they'll be glad to come in on a colder night." Any lingering idea of relenting in their purpose of ill-behavior had instantly left their insulted breasts.

"What," cried Aleck Heffron, seeing the young man open his book as if to commence teaching, "be ye goin' to begin wid no prayer?"

This was not said from motives of piety, but because that genius for torment shrewdly guessed that the suggestion would annoy.

"Indeed, I never pray," exclaimed the doctor. "I know no form of reasoning which justifies the temerity of approaching thus the divine element." He was so taken aback at the bare thought that he forgot his customary deference to Mollie's religious teachings in Syllabub, and spoke out his first impulse.

"Divine Element be hanged! We pray to God," cried Aleck, contemptuously.

"But you must pray," chorused the assembly, springing to their feet, and waving slates and books above their heads in excitement. "You're goin' back on Miss McCross. Give him the floor, fellows. It's time he learnt, if he don't know how. We stump him to it; we won't begin without. Hurrah for Haythorne!"

They were all in tumult, and their strongly-marked faces and muscular frames, whose vigor they displayed

in the careless vehemence of their action, looked dangerous. Francis Haythorne, however, was not appalled at their physical power. He had plenty of nerve and muscle himself beneath his lazy grace. But their impetuous demand confounded him. He dared not explain the true philosophy of his position, for he believed the savages incapable of comprehending it; nor was he willing to throw his influence on the side of the Tom Painish irreligion, which, in the lower classes, is the too frequent form of skepticism. In his dilemma, he turned appealingly to Mollie.

But she was as coldly unmoved as the white camellia in her bonnie brown hair. Mollie was such an intense believer in prayer herself, that she couldn't appreciate his horror. She was so used to the Syllabub way of doing things, that the hubbub didn't disturb her. She was glad to have him commit himself to a religious act he had always despised, and, back of all, she was maliciously pleased at his troubles, and regarded him as justly punished. It was a case of loving not Cæsar less, but Rome more.

Why men sometimes yield to unexpected pushes, and do what the relentless pressure of years could not move them toward one hair's breadth, is a problem beyond scientific solution. Our metaphysician found prejudices and legitimate conclusions too weak to oppose a handful of ignorant Irishmen. "Very well," said he, "I will offer a prayer; but you must be quiet first—so still we can hear a pin drop—before I begin."

"Arrah, take a darning-needle," said Hugh, "here's one. Swaller yer gab, Aleck Heffron. Be aisy, and make it the clock, Haythorne; that's a bully boy!" (This last in a wheedling tone).

The doctor, however, meant to reap what advantage he could from his enforced petition, and gravely

waited till the tumult subsided. Curiosity and habit brought perfect stillness, but just as this was attained Barney O'Hara, the little newsboy, on the front seat, shrieked, "It's time, let her drop!"

Francis Haythorne stood forth before the rabble, slender, scholarly, refined, immaculate, and consulting his conception of Deity, addressed it as best he might. In his haste he grasped at the notion of a familiar symbol.

"Divine Inventor, of whose complex but complete machinery we are but part; we study its relentless motion and adore thee in thy handiwork."

This was excellent; but why interfere in the matter of practical working; why be a rebellious cog-wheel? The philosopher gasped, sighed, took a long breath, and began afresh:

"Inscrutable, but absolutely pure Elemental Thought, whose immutable decrees we cognize in our existence, and the conditions thereof, we can but regard thee with profound awe." Clearly, this was illy adapted to Syl labub. The petitioner felt it. He would start again. But how hard to get hold of was this "Elemental Thought." He must be characterized. The doctor meant to be true to his conception, he would address no God but the one he knew. "Venerated Formula of Reason, Incomprehensible Abstraction of—of—the *non ego*; I mean Reasonable Explanation of the origin of the manifestations of the *non ego*,"—at this point the too-conscious speaker thought he heard a low titter; he clasped his delicate hands convulsively, the blood pressed against his burning skin till it seemed bursting from every pore, but no words came to aid him; the titter rose to a shriek of delight.

Amos Daley had found two small mud turtles the preceding summer, and, having cut a hole in their shells

fastened them by a string to a tree on the river bank. Before the ice formed he took them out of the mud, and saved them as a friendly contribution to Mollie's aquarium. He had handed them to her on his first entrance, and by the doctor's polite request she had transferred them to his care ; he in turn put them in his pocket. But, comforted by the warmth of the room, the largest turtle got out of the paper in which it had been neatly wrapped, and scrambled for liberty. Mr. Haythorne poked him back once or twice with his thumb, but in the difficulty of the invocation the animal had the advantage, and dropped to the floor. No eyes were closed, but compassion actually reduced amusement to a snicker. Mollie caught the runaway, and dropped into a box on her table. He was free a moment after, and first stretched forth his long neck, with its odd yellow spots and streaks, next a little black paw. Then he advanced to the edge of his platform, and stood switching his tail and gazing in marked ill-humor at Francis Haythorne, his mouth and face wearing the exact expression of Mr. Perfect with his teeth out. He was such an incarnation of disgust that even if his mate hadn't effected an escape and waddled off to parts unknown the shout would have been universal. Suddenly a little darkey, the butt of the neighborhood, slid from his seat, and stood on his head exactly in front of the doctor, his ivories gleaming, and his flat features molded into a horrible smirk. Francis Haythorne involuntarily opened his eyes at the shout of derisive mirth, reversed the posture of the acrobat, and gave up the prayer.

"Now, I'll get their attention by mental arithmetic," thought he, "then I can start them at work. A question of familiar import will interest." "Let us *have order!* If a man can black twenty pairs of boots

a day, and at ten cents a shine, I work seven days and five-sixths of a day, how much shall I have earned?"

"Nothin', most likely," said Peter Hennessy, with pleasant promptitude.

The oral method not appearing a success, it was abandoned. There had never been any classes in the school. Every one had studied by himself, and the teachers passed from desk to desk. But this evening the scholars kept changing places. If Francis Haythorne wanted to speak to a lad he had to follow him round the room. Sometimes, too, the pupils preferred sitting, sometimes standing.

"Why don't you find a seat?" he exclaimed, after Aleck had thus perambulated the premises, slate in hand, more than thrice.

"An' did you say for me to set?" inquired Master Heffron, pausing in affected surprise.

"Exactly so. What's that sum you're doing?"

"It's addition; and as for settin', that was your part—you telled me to foot it up."

The answer was made in perfect simplicity to all appearance, but every one near laughed, and the young doctor didn't know how to meet the impudent joke.

"Mr. Haythorne, what is a dirge?" asked Hugh, turning around to put the question squarely; "is it a funeral tune?"

"They were when they were sung, I believe."

"Should you call 'Wake Nick O'Demus' a dirge? There's a Paddy dyin' below, and we were thinkin' o' singin' it the night before he's buried. What's your advice? You're a musicianer."

"I can't advise, for I don't know the circumstances." Francis Haythorne's suspicion that he was being laughed at was confirmed by the patronizing explanation from Amos:

"Don't yer b'lieve him ; he thinks he's got a soft thing here. There ain't nobody by that name and never was."

"What do ye say that for?" retorted Hugh with infinite dignity. "You're goin' back on Miss McCross's teachin'. There was such an Irishman mentioned in last Sunday's lesson. One o' the holy disciples. Hoot now!"

"You are going back on Miss McCross when you pretend that you haven't learned simple addition," said Mollie, coming by in time to hear this appeal to her dignity, and glancing at the slate in Hugh's hand. "How can you do so? You were in fractions when we left off last year."

"That's a fact," confirmed Amos.

"No, Miss Mollie," said Hugh, sorrowfully ; "honest and true it's long division I'm to. "I've ben so far every winter sence we had a school. Nobody could ever make me understand it, an' I bet you can't."

Mollie stood a moment in thought, during which the naughty boys sat meekly watching her, a little conscience-stricken. She seldom spoke severely, but this only augmented her weight with them. A syllable of displeasure hurt as much as another's sharpest reproof. Indeed, she hardly found fault by words at all. She had learned how to make silence speak. Looking up she met Doppy Mulligan's anxious glance. Doppy had contrived to keep one shoulder bent toward the misdoers all the evening, nor had Amos once vouchsafed a moment's recognition of her presence. But she knew that he was compelling himself to a quiescence very foreign to his nature, and liable to give way in one direction or the other at any moment. Never was a night's coquetry more bitterly

repented, or expiated in more painful uncertainty of dread.

Mollie guessed the whole story at a glance and flew to the rescue. In a moment more the malcontents were grouped about a tiny blackboard at the front of the desks, and the writing class installed in their places.

Leaving Francis Haythorne to the intricacies of quotients and divisors, she began inducting Dippy, Mary Ellen Heffron, and a dozen other young misses into the details of chirography, keeping the while as faithful an outlook as possible on the doings of sundry small boys who were pulling each other's hair, kicking under the desks, and otherwise behaving as badly as they dared.

The girls were already tolerable pen-women, and Mollie, who had been their only teacher, was very proud of them. She was so absorbed in hair-lines, lines of beauty, and analyzed letters, that she forgot all about her confrère, till a crash and howl of dismay and anguish started every one to her feet.

The arithmetic class had evidently proved a failure. But the reason thereof deserves telling.

The examples had been worked and the explanations listened to for some time in peace. An occasional scrape of the bench over the dirty floor, enjoyed on account of their teacher's shudder at each infliction, satisfied the boys. They had even begun to grow interested, and attacked some difficult problems.

"Well," said Hugh, disgustedly, lifting his blue eyes from his slate, "I don't understand long division no way. Didn't I tell you I couldn't? I can't get the quotient no how."

If Francis Haythorne had understood Syllabub, he would have seen his evening's success in the frank

perplexity puckering the young fellow's fresh face, and drawing down the corners of his mobile mouth. As it was, he felt encouraged, and replied, as he thought, kindly :

"You must practice a little perseverance. Of course, people of your station do not learn very readily, but that's no reason for giving up."

"Look a here," said Hugh, flushing and hardening, "we know one kind of long division, you bet—the Paddy-kind—the mechanics' method. Shall we teach it to him, Amos?"

As ill-luck would have it, Mr. Daley, whose influence had hitherto been the great support of good order, had just permitted himself a survey of little Doppy, who read relenting in his wistful look. She no sooner made the discovery, than she compressed her piquant features into their most portentous frown—straightened her graceful shape into angry rigidity—and stuck out her foot in a way that expressed willfulness to her utmost. Not content with this, she looked the young man full in the eye, tossed her head, and flashed the tip of her tongue as insultingly as she knew how.

Amos turned back to the class abruptly, and produced a roll of pigtail tobacco, from which he, with perfect gravity, measured a piece the length of his nose, and bit it off. Aleck took his turn next, with equal solemnity, and, in this manner, every boy in the class found his rightful quantity without a smile or dimple having softened a single face. Hugh, as the last of the group, offered what remained to the bewildered teacher, with the apologetic remark that Amos had cheated, and taken a length too much, but he reckoned there'd be enough for his bite.

The doctor cast a look of squeamish aversion at

the proffered gift, whereupon Aleck exclaimed : "Put it up, darlint ; don't smash old egg-shells by your roughness. People of his station don't seem to learn very readily."

After this, there was no more attempt at study. They all sat rocking back and forth on the hind legs of their bench, till it suddenly overturned, and they cracked their heads in the fall, and got more bruises than they liked to own.'

The catastrophe sent Doppy's pet quite out of her mind. She forgot everything, except that Amos might have broken his neck, and rushed to rescue him from the heap. Hugh was already on his feet, and stood chuckling at the rueful faces of his mates as they rose from their dusty bed. Mary Ellen Heffron had dragged her brother up by the arm, but Aleck, so far from being thankful, desired her to keep her meddling hands off. Francis Haythorne remained beside the black-board, uninterested in the result, unless a smile, grim and contemptuous, playing about his thin lips, would betray emotion. Doppy stood anxiously dusting Amos's shoulders with her handkerchief as he recovered his sense of the situation which the sudden downfall had startled out of him. His lips were very pale, but he didn't say anything, except to thank her gratefully for her care ; then, following her to the writing-desks, sat down beside her. As every one of the overturned heroes flocked after him, Mollie, rather than have the disorder of a second readjustment of places, carried off her girls to study arithmetic in their turn, and left Francis Haythorne master of the field. But here he had no better comfort.

"I wish you would stop chewing tobacco," he cried, a few moments after they were fairly at work. "The room is *disgusting* already."

"Nearly every boy respected his request, but again the remark was couched in unpleasant form. Each time his back was turned Aleck Heffron emptied a bottle of writing fluid into his pocket, and incited his friends to do the same.

"What has become of all the ink," said Francis Haythorne. "It's quite gone. What did you do with it Miss Mollie?"

"No clickin' allowed," bawled Tim Heffron, Aleck's second brother, watching the gentleman's aside to Miss McCross.

Aleck dealt the young branch a fraternal blow on the head, not at all thankful for his assistance. "By the powers! it's good for heartburn. We all take it for our health."

The others nodded in confirmation of the statement, and the doctor, who was getting thoroughly out of patience, went angrily for the can, and refilled the stands.

"What are you doing?" as Barney O'Hara emptied his over Tim Heffron's head. "After this is gone there will be no more forthcoming, you may be certain of that."

"I'm baptizing him," said Tim. "Sure, isn't it a Christian duty?"

"It'll be a Christian duty to put you out of the room if you do it again," cried the teacher, his color rising.

"There, there, don't get yer back up," said Peter Hennessey, soothingly. "Saw'd off (the last incumbent) did; he always flew out at oncht, and we wouldn't have it."

Now, as it happened, Peace Pelican had had a rencounter with Timothy Heffron only a day or so before, and the memory of it was fresh in his mind.

The beauty had been walking through Syllabub with her usual lofty dignity. She was a remarkably graceful walker, but it was with a slow and measured tread, as unlike any in Milleville as the zig-zag gait of a goddess to that of an ordinary mortal. It was hence not surprising that all the young Heffrons and their playmates fell into line and mimicked her with ludicrous exaggeration.

Peace, annoyed, turned round and exclaimed, "Naughty children, don't you know its rude to mock people? Only monkeys do so. We all step as God made us."

"Take my arm, madam, and we'll walk together," cried Tim, the biggest, raggedest, dirtiest of all.

As Peace had retired with a glance of terrible disgust, the boy longed to revenge himself, and thought he here saw an opportunity. "Whicht, by's, mind yer manners, and trate him tinder fur Bean Pole Pelican's sake. He's her feller."

The affronted lover writhed under the coarse remark, but his misery was increased ten-fold when he looked up and saw the lady herself sitting behind him, her face brilliant with a smile of mockery and anger, her shoulders wrapped in a scarlet Paisley shawl that reflected a vivid brightness all about her. Aleck, who was willing to torment, but not to insult, pulled the rat from his seat, and, shaking him as he went along, dropped him into the street. Then, ashamed to return, went down to the corners to wait for his mates.

"I guess I'll dig out," said Peter Hennessey, scrambling after him. A moment later, looking about for his pupils, Francis Haythorne beheld the last of them, like a procession of caterpillars squirming along under the seats toward liberty.

Amos and Doppo were the only ones left; even

the girls had thrown on their things, and flocked to enjoy in the snow the fun they had all the evening been surreptitiously watching. To judge by the boyish shouts and shrill feminine yells already arising, they were getting their fill now.

“What made them go so?” hesitated the deserted pedagogue, less for information than to cover his confusion.

“We don’t like you,” answered Amos, straightforwardly, and without malice. “I would have run, too, if I’d been able.”

Francis Haythorne had no need to seek Peace’s face to read the contempt at his defeat written there. He felt its sting to the depths of his soul. She not only despised him, but her presence at Syllabub showed her desire for the opportunity. She had wished him to fail that she might root out of her heart by aid of the sight any tenderness she felt for him. Now the event met all her hopes, and she exulted in the freedom it gave her. His scholars had neither maltreated each other nor him; they had only proved his inefficiency by laughing at him. He was the butt of their ridicule. They didn’t count him a man. For the first time in his life the Sybarite had allowed himself to be brought to the test of a struggle for respect on the merits of bare manliness, and he had not gained it. His humiliation was heightened by surprise. He was grateful to Mollie for appearing oblivious of his existence. Her delicate care in dressing to please her charge no more offended his spirit. He realized the use she made of her beauty with respect—the respect due to success. He hoped she would never turn round. She had seen him a stick, when he ought to have proved a commander. Her prognostications were now fulfilled. Then she had known his weak places the

whole time, and hence she—they—had never considered him worth much after all. This passed through his brain in one swift throb of dismay, as he listened to Amos. Then, with a revulsion, he turned exasperated on the young fellow, and shook him fiercely by the shoulders.

“ Let go! hands off, mister,” said the youth, wincing. “ Keep your feelin’s to yourself, or I’ll take my turn. I didn’t mean they should rough it on ye as bad as this, but it’s your own fault. You could have the man or the brute in us as ye called for it.” He spoke with a mild but determined voice, and that consciousness of restrained power that more than anything else impresses the disturbed soul.

Francis Haythorne, loosening his hold, said, “ Pardon me,” mechanically, and Amos rose to his feet, staggered a few paces, and leaned heavily against the wall for support. “ Doppy, I’ve either broken or sprained my shoulder in that confounded upset,” said he, in a faint tone. He had forgotten all the provocations she had given him to wrath. He only felt that she was his strength in this moment of weakness. “ You must help me home,” said he, with unconscious confidence.

The ebullition of wrath indulged in by the doctor must have cost the poor fellow dear, for all his courage couldn’t prevent a groan from escaping from him now and again, as Doppy hurried to take his hand, and by gentle pressure on his unhurt arm test how effectual an aid her support would be. Mollie, forgetful of the two aristocrats who were adjuncts of the scene, had also run to comfort her boy.

Peace withdrew a little from the doctor, apparently that she might watch him better in her excitement at

this revelation of his character, heedless, in her turn, of the pain that gave the opportunity.

Francis Haythorne, for the moment, was simply conscious of Peace, and himself in her eyes. He was nettled with defeat, angry that he should have lost his composure, and quite wrapped up in his own annoyance. As he had never pretended the faintest interest in Sylabub, he evinced no hypocrisy in preferring the consciousness of his smarts to theirs. Amos was nothing more to him than a grasshopper. "Miss Pelican, may I attend to your safety on the way home?" said he, bound by good breeding to a social duty, when pity couldn't suggest one of humanity quite as obvious.

She bowed scornfully, aware of the distinction, and setting it against him, but hearing in her ears no call to remind the self-absorbed. She had lost her fur gloves, and was searching for them as she passed down the aisle.

"Some of the canaille have probably stolen them," said the doctor, pulling on his own. "We'll send the police to look them up to-morrow."

They were almost gone, when they remembered Mollie. "Are you ready, Miss McCross? we are waiting for you," they cried in one breath.

Mollie wondered if they really meant to leave the hurt boy uncared for. "Don't let me detain you," she said, quietly. "Hugh Dennis will see me home, as usual." She raised her head from an investigation of Amos's bruise to watch the pair pass out at the door.

There was an exclamation of fright, and a general hurrah of triumph. Miss McCross hastened to view the new mishap, and saw the pedagogue picking himself out of the snow, Tim Heffron carefully detaching from the lintels the string whereby they had tripped him up. All the scholars ranged at safe distance to

enjoy the fun, and Peace, who had seen the trick in time to save herself, standing a study of disgust, amusement bordering on contempt, anger, and haughty dignity, waiting her escort's recovery of his feet.

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. MCCROSS'S MISSION.

“Cross-patch, draw the latch, sit by the fire and spin,
Take a cup and drink it up, and call the neighbors in.”

T was probably because Mrs. McCross didn't think the first part of my couplet worthy of consideration that she failed to observe its advice, though she paid implicit obedience to the second. Her impending widowhood seemed no restraint upon her plans and progress. She refused to draw in the latch string. On the contrary, she shelved her pill boxes and patent medicines as her husband's ailments increased, and began a calling-tour upon all her acquaintances, even the most remote. Mrs. Perfect accompanied her, and their labors soon produced a general fermentation.

It had been some time hinted that the present pastorate was not productive in personal religion ; that the old deacons had so nipped in the bud the exhortatory aspirations of the younger generation that they absented themselves from the stated and covenant meetings ; that Deacon McCross, who had for years sawed dolefully up to the top notch of religious need, and then broken off the timber with a vivacious amen,

and Mr. John Bizby, whose petitions had the exact effect of a big buzzing bumble-bee, and Taffy, the Welch miller, who weekly begged that the good seed might fall into their hearts and find a lodgment there, were more conducive of ennui than edification. It was even hinted of the last that good seed was quite apt to find a lodgement in his hopper, if not his heart ; and every one smiled when the last set of deacons were ordained. There was such a contrast between their practice and the precept set forth in the service.

Though Fred. Growing never echoed the words of a certain celebrated divine, who said that having been so fortunate as to live through one revival, he daily prayed God to spare him a second, he was known to lean more to gradual growth than violent transplanting. Accordingly, at every communion service, his young folks came by twos and threes to vow themselves to God before the flower-crowned altar, and went away, fearless in sense of their Father's perfect love, humble in knowledge of their own failings and desires ; hopeful, because their hope was lovable to them—earnest, because, longing for this good hope, they recognized its possession as possible. Patiently sought, faithfully instructed, “ You, then, in the presence of angels and men do promise,” was an adjuration of joyful never-to-be-forgotten solemnity. The universe assembled to witness the covenant, and visible human fellowship held open the wicket gate till these tender childish feet should pass safely through.

That bright summer morning, when Mollie made thus the oaths of God's people, the stillness of the church was magnetic from beating hearts, because a score of parents were that day offering up their children. Some one, none knew who, had made the cracked *old pulpit* an obelisk of vines and blossoms, and

through the open windows came the sound of birds singing in the trees. The postulants sat beside their loved ones, the awesome sweetness of the time filling their hearts. Soon the organ broke forth exultantly, but it only mingled with the wonderful harmony of God's universe, there, first made plain to these young ears. Then, indeed, they knew why the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. On the table and the sacred elements were scattered blossoms, odorous—dewy. As the pastor stood before the band of confessors, his hands toyed idly with the symbols, so perfect and sweet, while he rehearsed the duties of the disciples' life. Suddenly, he held them up. "See," said he, "the emblems of our Master—the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley. Take them, my children. May your hands ever be filled with their fragrance." Could such a memento be other than treasured, and who can measure the strength that lies in such a memory—a memory the foretaste of heaven?

But the old-fashioned church was gathered stick and stone to its fathers, and Mr. Growing had been hunted away, and, in the new and elegant edifice, Dr. Perfect reigned in his stead.

It was a fact that, in the excitement of conventions and delegations to conventions, the youths suffered from the elder's forgetfulness. The galleries, once crowded by young men, were empty. The choir, in former times filled with fresh, pure voices, lapsed alternately from Ave Marias and Sanctuses in the hands of hirelings to discordant and soul-wrenching attempts at congregational singing. The children, missing the loving greeting of their first pastor, who knew all their names, and was wont to walk hand-in-hand with them toward school, dropped out of Sabbath-classes. Every

thing concentrated itself into the spiritual pyrotechnics of the great Dr. Perfect, D.D. LL.D. Captain Slocum said he yummmed the critter was probably waiting the next vacancy in the archangels, and withdrew the Seven. In short, barrenness was the aspect of the good land.

It was indeed high time that the sisters should supplement the labors of their better halves. The Goncusssets, thus stirred up to good works, reflected upon their expensive church building, and reviewed the matter in all the light of business experience. They soon concluded to buy up a certain promissory note, indorsed by heaven, and understood to be payable on sight. This was less comprehended and better recognized as a protracted meeting. The church committee sent for an evangelist, who dispensed with the sermon to the doctor's unutterable disgust, talked much about the "dear young ladies," set three or four people praying aloud at once, shut off the organ to inaugurate a succession of "Come to Jesus, just now," and held a three-hours' prayer-meeting at the Sunday-school, wherein the little children became unmanageable from weariness, and the teachers wished themselves small so that they might become unmanageable too. All through the week there were church-gatherings—morning, afternoon and evening—whereat the revivalist, who had a bald crown, long hair, and goggle blue eyes, presided, and his daughter led the singing of touching juvenile melodies, with a piano, brought in for the occasion. Miss Pettingil, the village tailoress, had taken an active part in the arrangements for the revival. A day or two after its prosperous opening, she began to feel the effects of hard work, and resolved to refresh her aching bones with a cup of weak green tea and an afternoon of rest and stocking-darning.

She had just started her fire with a handful of chips, and set on the old-fashioned bulgy tea-pot, when the door shook under a vigorous combination of rap and kick. She craned up with a nervous start, and protecting herself by the pantry-door, peered through the window at the new arrival. He (it was a man), presently grew tired of waiting for a welcome not offered, and entered without further ceremony.

"You might as well come out, Cousin Almiry," said he, seating himself. "I ain't goin' to eat you up."

He was a tall, brown man, with muddy, restless black eyes, and a hooked nose, very much one-sided. His costume of green, black, and blue-plaid pants, scarlet-plaided plush vest, long-bodied blue coat Alpine hat, and a scarlet kerchief of silk, knotted about his throat, was of itself remarkable enough to strike terror to the heart of a timid single woman ; but Miss Petingil was not moved by fear, but disappointment.

"Sakes alive ! what ill wind brought you here ?" said she, putting her head out of her retreat, and then bobbing it in like a turtle.

"I came to take a friendly cup of tea with you," returned he, deliberately, tipping his chair to its hind legs as he spoke, and casting a professional glance about the funny old room, which was just as it had been fifty years ago—only that much dingier. "I may be hungry, you know ; you ain't goin' to turn me out ?"

"No, Tom Knox ! I don't cackellate to have it on my conscience that I ever did that," said the tailoress, softening ; "but I ain't glad to see you ; that's a fact. Draw up." So saying, she likewise settled herself at

table. "I'd be afraid of bein' took if I was you," said she, handing him the requested luxury.

"I am!" he answered, coolly. "But a fellow can't stay among strangers forever. Now Mulligan and Haverty are dead, my friends have thinned, but I feel drawed to Millville somehow, though it's dangerous beyond any other. I often think I'll never come back, but I always do. P'raps you wouldn't object to a piece of cheese?" producing a handsome triangle, and untying the string with his be-ringed fingers.

Miss Petingil craned up. "I ain't agoin' to tetch that till I know how it was got. I won't play partaker at my time of life—not in one thing, little or big, if it does smell first-rate." She was an inordinate lover of the comestible.

"Just to rest your mind, I'll tell you," said Knox, with an amused smile. "I says to myself, 'you must buy it honest ; the old girl won't take nothin' less,' so I paid for it."

"Then there's cookies to eat too ;" and she ambled cheerfully to the cupboard, and produced them, in a gilt-edged soup tureen covered with a fine-fringed napkin washed thin, but beautifully darned ;—for Miss Petingil had her heirlooms as well as another. Her visitor watched her, his fierce face made tender by a gleam of pity. He looked like a clever, passionate, shiftless fellow, whose heart had its human spots, though its owner had knocked about the world enough to get desperate. The forlorn spinster awoke long-forgotten memories in him. Though he wished from necessity to conciliate her, he would have worn the same expression had the desired boon been already his.

"I say, Almiry, you ha'in't a beau, nowadays, I

take it? you was never very set after the boys ;" in a tone of family interest.

"Law me, Tom," retorted she, in animation ; "you hain't any friend in a dreadful suz to ask me, have you?"

"Not in the least, but I'm your relative, you know, and want to keep track sorter."

Miss Petingil had emerged from behind the blue door of the closet (the woodwork of the room was all painted a somber shade of that hue), and stood with the latch in her hand, as she made reply : "Peculiar of you, Tom ; I ain't the one to say 'good lord' to a man, as some girls will ; I have my ideas as well as the next one."

She craned up with dignity as she spoke, and applied her attention to setting the table. As Knox followed with his eyes her tall, bent, angular form, a quick light shot into them,—his frame knit itself like a cat's drawn up to spring,—then by a violent effort of will he resumed his former listless attitude. "Almiry," called he, rocking backward and forward on his chair's hind legs, and picking his teeth ; "ain't Uncle Petingil's silver spoons and two cut glass decanters there on the shelf? I seem to see 'em. Yes? well, won't you be so good as to lock the door, an' put the key in your pocket. I've come to chat with you and play the straight game, but I shall be sure to steal something before I go, so have an eye on what you want to keep."

"Law, Tom, you hadn't orter," said the maiden, with fully as much uneasiness as one might except from such a warning. "Peculiar how folks ken! Why not make a stand,—be firm with yourself?" Then, with sudden recollection of the Revivalist teachings—“There is a fiery dreadful hell!” you know.”

Mr. Knox smiled wickedly. "When the wicked man forsakes his sins, and does that which is right, he shall save his soul alive," he quoted, with admirable facility; "but it's a darned sight easier to spout Scripture than to act on it. I can't help it. 'The sins of the father shall be visited,' you know. I never could give up a chance; when I was a little shaver, I remember stealing five tumblers of sour milk, at once, that you'd put under your bureau for your complexion, an' givin' 'em to the pig. That was when you was sparkin' a beau, Captain Jack. You remember."

"Not a bit of it!" Miss Petingil actually blushed at the lacteal imputation.

"I recollect another job I did a few years ago." Knox was speaking reflectively. "An old fellow tied his wagon to the elm near the town pump; he had a load of hogs piled up in it, mighty pink an' temptin'. I knew the minister wa'n't half fed, 'n' I hung 'em all in his smoke house, with a paper on 'em,—'From a pitying pal.' By and by I grew sick of driving old Rawbones, an' hitched him under the church shed, while the preachin' was goin' on, an' put. But I got a year for't, though I hadn't realized a cent."

"Glad on't," said Miss Petingil, sourly. It crossed her foible to be obliged to keep this fine story to herself from pitiful family pride. "What's your trade just now?"

"I never had but one," answered the neer-do-weel, composedly. "I am a professional! If you want to know my principles I'm not averse to stating 'em. I'm in the commercial interest and agin monopolies."

"What's that to dew with it?" said Miss Petingil, sniffing.

"Why, this: the difference is all whether you act from moral conviction or low kleptomania. I always

go by moral conviction. If such a minded man is sure monopolies is an outrage on the rights of the American citizen, it's his duty to fight 'em all he can. But the best way to break a monopoly is to embezzle : it's so gentlemanly, and fashionable in the fust circles. The man who tackles the biggest monopoly is of course the biggest fellow. Why, Almyra, if we, counting the Washington officials in, of course, if we keep on, there won't be enough monopoly left to sustain a hall-door thief. We shall have virtuously annihilated it." Mr. Knox rose, and waved his arms enthusiastically as he spoke.

"I ain't sure I foller you, Tom ;" said the tailoress, doubt clouding her sharp glances. "If you'd tell me which you've fit against, I might sense you better."

"Mine?" cried Knox, "mine is Uncle Sam. *E pluribus unum.*"

Miss Pettingil had evidently on her side a certain tenderness for her relative, for though she shut her blue mouth disapprovingly at his financial career, she asked, in a gentle tone, "What brings you to me, Tom? You want something, what is it? I'm an honest woman, remember, but I'll do anything in reason. Don't tempt me, for I ain't nowise sure of myself."

"Nobody axed you to be partner in no job," retorted Mr. Knox, loftily. "I'm keepin' shady here, an' doin' a little electioneering. If you peach on me, you know, I'm a gone coon. I owe time at Joliet, Sing Sing, an' Jersey, an' several more ; I can't afford to be identified, for in one place they've got it all fixed to hang me. You'll have my blood on your head if I'm took ; though, for the matter o' that, I won't hang, no way. I'm just comfortable here, gullin' them folks at the gospel shop, and livin' well. Beyond lyin' off loose I hain't nothin' in view."

"Dew tell! Peculiar, how folks ken," said Miss Pettingil, the hanging having awakened all her sympathy. "No, I hain't no idee of blabbin'. You can rest jest as quiet as a new-laid egg. I never repeat anything," she added candidly. "I can't abide a tell-tale, or a gad-about-chatter-box! They ain't fit to live."

Miss Pettingil's near relation tweaked his one-sided nasal organ to conceal a saturnine grin: and the old gossip cut a vast slice of cheese to round out her meal, thereby allowing the professional opportunity to pocket the teaspoon in his cup.

"Did you say you was lately from Top Town?" queried she, suddenly scenting a possible item. "Then mebbe you saw that young Allwood there. Any news of him? You know, I wouldn't on any account repeat a word you say."

"I broke last summer," answered Knox. "I have never see anybody from there. But," with increasing fierceness, "I'll allow anywhere that he's as pizen mean a sneak as ever spit cotton. I was glad to have him beaten: it was just the sauce for such a pudding-hearted cuss. He dared to come the gospel dodge over *me*,—one of the first burglars in the United States, and talked of rectitude and honor, because I made him the offer to escape when I did. If I should ever meet him, even at death's door, I'd take the chance to show him who and what he insulted. He'll smart for his pride yet."

"Laws a massy!" screeched the tailoress. "Where's my sheers, an' half Squire Hitchcock's new vest? Stickin' out o' your pocket! Now, hand them back, an' say you haven't abused hospitality, an' me your own cousin!"

"Take the spoon too, an' your thimble, an' yer

Japan mermaid, an' the gourd with the two ten-cent pieces," answered Tom, emptying his pockets penitently ; "they looked too natural to leave. An' stop, Almiry ! Here's money. You look desprit seedy. Take it an' fix up, an' oblige. I can get more. It'll all be fooled off if you don't." The sewing woman watched the bills go down on the table longingly. It was a generous gift, kindly meant. She half resolved to thank heaven for the fortune,—little, but more than the price of months of hard work. Her times were bad enough ! But then there lay the stolen contents of the same pockets on the same washed check table spread. Miss Petingil was a scandal-monger, but she was conscious of unfaltering rectitude. In all her taking in of sewing no half-breadths or scraps of patchwork ever adhered to her piece-basket. She was angularly trustworthy,—no, she could not soil her integrity with such spoil.

"No, Tom !" said she, rolling up the tempting greenbacks, and unconsciously exposing, as she did so, her sewed-up, scrub-knobby hands, which bore the trade-mark of every department of "woman's work," "thank you kindly, but I'm afraid it would be peculiar to take money from you that need all you've got to keep you goin'. I das say you'll play it away, but I don't see my line of duty to be mixcd up with such things."

Mr. Knox looked disappointed. He was a bundle of impulses. He had meant well. But he placed the rejected gift in a flashy portmonnaie, and answered, frankly : "Like enough you're right ; them were Captain Jack's idees, which he related the night before he went out amongst the Comanche Indians, an' got scalped. I don't despute them in no manner. I'm due at the Revival Mass Meeting for Temperance at seven.

I've agreed to tell my experience. *Buenos noches!* With which Spanish farewell, given in Mexican accent, he donned his red-winged Alpine hat, and strode away.

"Allus a good critter, but drefful slack," said Miss Petingil, closing the door behind him. "Well, I must hurry to wash them tea things an' 'tend the meetin' myself. I had to laf when he spoke of Allwood. Of course one could say they'd heard he got the cat without betrayin' confidence. Mebbe I'll see Mollie McCross to-night. She'd like to hear on't."

Early in the revival Mrs. Perfect made a speech. The day after Knox's call on Miss Petingil she made another, in which the main point urged was the necessity of taking off one's jewels if one would enter the Christian life; and she narrated how a young lady once converted her entire family by this simple method. Her husband, who was watching the whole proceeding with disaffection, took the floor immediately: "In these meetings," quoth he, assuming a strong position in view of Goggle-eyes usurpations, and talking in husky bass, "we encounter a great disadvantage. *Stat pro ratione voluntas.* Heated by the moment we say and do so many foolish things,"—and sat down.

After this Mr. Knox arose. Tall, brown, with long black mustaches and muddy eyes, he looked just what he was,—a pleasure-loving shyster, with plenty of wit and audacity, and little virtue. But this by no means damaged his present position. A prodigal the revivalists wanted, and a prodigal they had assuredly found. His public reputation, however, differed somewhat from Almira Petingil's estimate of him. He was now electioneering in favor of the Temperance candidates for town honors, though he paid so little heed to his tongue in the minor matter of truth that he had

already gained the sobriquet of "Frisky Ananias." But, being a convert to Goncusset piety, he was, as he announced, "a happy, spouting Christian," notwithstanding his lies, and Mrs. McCross forthwith invited him to tea.

Deacon McCross's wife had been far from idle while the interests of Zion were under consideration. She had gathered up people from the ends of the town, brought in backsliders of thirty years' standing, urged infants upon the anxious seat whose mouths were fitter for molasses candy than confessions of damning guilt. Thursday night she explained to the worshiping congregation that she had been looking all day for a burden, and she thought she'd found one. She believed partakers in dances, giddiness, dress, vain thoughts, false pride of intellect, to be of necessity enemies of Christ. What right had people to be amused and laughing in the face of a perishing world? She desired the prayers of the church for such a mother.

This was leveled at Dulcet Slocum, who as we said, had withdrawn the seven young Slocums from these moral theatricals; indeed, they didn't even attend church, being in classes in Jan Vedder's new mission school, nearer home. The flutter of excitement had not subsided as Mrs. McCross, her Phillipic delivered, seated herself, when Miss Petingil rose. Human soul couldn't longer endure the personalities of her young neighbors, who had made fun of her cocks' feather plume, and free with her snuff; she said she didn't for her part feel much interest in mothers, what she asked was the prayers of the church for them whisperin', gigglin' minxes and sassboxes before her.

As the assembly, despite these efforts, seemed likely to be a quiet, unblessed affair, the revivalist gave out "Jesus paid it all" to be sung, and after profuse sigh-

ing and weeping during the performance suddenly sprang to his feet, jumped up and down three times, clapped his hands together above his head, shouted "Glory Halleluiah ! I'll bust !" and fell in a trance on the floor, after which due excitement prevailed.

Mrs. Perfect watched the growth of Sister McCross's labors for a day or two, and then, resolved not to be out-done, planned an attack on Squire Hitchcock, who, not having attended the exercises, might be feared to have fallen from grace. She found the object of her solicitude sitting with his wife in the parlor, busily balancing accounts, and at once entered upon her errand.

"Sister Hitchcock," said she, her voice climbing the scale of sweetness (she always spoke with the rising inflection), "can we not have a season of prayer for your husband's soul ? Hm !"

Mrs. Hitchcock didn't respond very warmly. "Ask him," said she, pointing to her lord ; "I'm not particular."

"Brother, will you not lead us before the throne of grace, and remember your first love ? Hm !"

The squire uncrossed his legs and surveyed her, with lowering brow. "I'd like to know what right you have pryin' into my private history," said he ; "no !" and returned to his papers.

"Ah !" said Mrs. Perfect, grasping her bonnet strings, and pausing to gather her forces. "Then we will not approach the mercy-seat together ?" with gentle insinuation.

"No !" said Mr. Hitchcock, with increased vehemence.

Mrs. McCross and the minister's help-meet were one in action ; but the mental peculiarities that produced *this unanimity* differed essentially. Mrs. McCross in-

variably went by the impulse of the moment, and took her piety as a sharp weapon ; but with Mrs. Perfect these things were business. True, her official habiliments were worn at all times, like her inevitable black calico—that was because she was enthusiastic in her profession ; but it was the enthusiasm of sustained will, not eagerness or feeling, that actuated her. She was not, therefore, at all abashed, when a blank silence, preserved by her hosts, compelled her to rise.

“ Shall we not greet one another at parting with a kiss of godly fellowship ? ” said she, making preparations to present her forbidding mouth to the squire.

“ NO WE WON’T ! ” cried the irate man, drawing back from the false teeth of the saint, with a snap, and rushing away as she took a step in apparent pursuit. “ She’s worse ’n Euphemy ! ”

The day of Mrs. Perfect’s last oration, as the happy, shouting Christian left the church, his thoughts more intent on the dinner his exertions had already seasoned than his beatitude in grace, he saw a large-boned, ragged woman grinding drearily at a hand-organ. She had taken so near a place to the door that he just missed stumbling over the cadaverous infant asleep on her shawl. She extended her cigar box for alms. Few of the issuing congregation heeded her mute appeal. Knox, however, was charitable by habit, and so was Dr. Perfect. “ Woman, ” cried the good priest, in stentorian tones, “ repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He took out his pocket-book, and fumbled awhile among its contents. “ What’s your name ? ” demanded he, putting his umbrella under his arm so as to arrest every passer-by, and swelling with pomposity.

“ Johanna Haverty, if you please, a widow, with this helpless orphing, and starved, ” she whimpered,

keeping a sharp lookout on her other probable benefactor. But Knox was leaning against the fence, watching the divine's maneuvers with contemptuous curiosity, and had no thought of escape.

"Well, Johanna, go and sin no more. I've nothing less than a nickel. Can you give me four cents change?" Joe smiled. What a smile! So sly, bitter, hopeless, and resentful.

"Yes, sir," said she, with a deferential duck of her head. Then, as she dropped her concentrated gains into their receptacle, two pairs of wicked black eyes met, and her lips curled in satire.

The ponderous dignity of Dr. Perfect had already set its face up the street in the wake of his departed congregation, and the burglar approached, reinforced Joe's purse with a bill, and whispered, "What the devil are you here for?"

"I got lonesome," said she, rising, and adjusting the band of her organ, wearily. Her ragged sleeves fell back to disclose her arms,—cold-pinched, but even more blue from famine. "The worst of company bees better'n none." She didn't leer at this familiar repartee, but uttered it as a maxim gained through sad experience. "Ain't you sprigged up pretty fine?" for the first time taking in the splendors of his array; "what keeps you here, anyhow?"

"Nothin', except it's shady," said Knox; "and it won't be that if folks twig me pattering with you."

"You're too light-minded to be shady anywheres," pronounced Joe, dispassionately; "you'll be nabbed to-morrow; I've comded to tell you so."

Knox's face naturally fell at this news, but he only ran his fingers once or twice through his coarse black curls, and observed with sincerity, "Serve me right

for swelling in that gospel shop ;" then relapsed into thought. Joe did not go off when her errand was done. She dragged up her babe from its slumber at her feet by one of its little arms, heedless of its feeble wailing, and waited till the fugitive should have finished his reflections. A few seconds later he drew a long breath, pitched up a penny he still held unpocketed, after his bequest to Joe, caught it, and made as if to depart, his resolve taken.

" Not so fast," cried the woman, eagerly ; " I want a good turn before you quit Millville."

Something in her manner made Knox, hardened villain as he was, hesitate. She never came near him without causing him to shudder, and just now she wore the same reckless, revengeful aspect he remembered in her the night she clutched him in the alley. Seeing him shrink away, like a coward, as he was, she drew back the hand she had put out to detain him, folded her arms, threw up her head, imperious in her rags. He quailed before her straightforward hate, and mumbled abjectly, " Anything in my line. I don't take life."

" No one asks it," Joe permitted herself an ogreish smile. " But the McCrosses—father, mother and daughter—I hate."

" What of that?"

" You might serve 'em out for me ; rob 'em."

" Why?" Mr. Knox didn't like the proposal. " I'm to take supper with the old woman, and it looks bad. They never did nothin' to you? She seems sickly."

" No, not as I knows on;" Joe's voice was throbbing with passion. " The day afore Christie was sentenced, I went for to see him, and Deacon McCross, he stood by his cell talkin' to him ; an' whin I come up after

him goin', 'Joe, my girl,' sez Christie, lookin' worried, 'it's a wicked old devil he an' she both is. They're ruinin' an innocent man,' an' I could get no more from him. Them's his very words. An' I've made it out that they are at the bottom of all his ill luck. How do I know but they put him there theirselves, curse 'em! 'An innocent man,' sez he."

At this moment a lady, pale, gray clad, her eyes, blue like two lakes, half hidden by their long lashes, and with a mouth whose sweet curves were saddened from blithesomeness to patience, came swiftly up the street. She held a basket in her hand, full of dishes, covered by a napkin; and, as she saw Joe, drew from her gray muff a piece of money and dropped it into the box. She hesitated a moment as she met the insolent gaze of the pair, and then said, in a voice tender and soft as a violet, or a sad hymn, "Why, Joe! When did you come here? I hope you are well."

She looked a little hurt as the beggar drew back defiantly and answered, "Same as most tramps, I s'pose. We ain't house plants," and then dropped her eyes and the corners of her mouth into the most offensive stolidity she could assume, whereby she accomplished her object. The lady, thus rebuffed, staid to say—"Whenever I can help you I will," in the same gentle, beseeching accents, and, seeing no relenting in Joe's sullen aspect, went quietly away.

"That's the young one," said the woman; "All-wood's sweetheart, she is; she's harmless, but she's one of 'em, and I hate her; I won't have her money." She tore the gift into shreds and scattered it to the winds. Thus occupied, she was too full of her resentment to observe the expression of her companion's face, now as malicious, and far, more intelligent, than her own. "*His sweetheart, is she?* Then he'll see how Tom

Knox keeps his word. You're right, Joe, this is something quite in my line."

Accordingly that afternoon he peered into the windows of Fir Covert, with ill intent in his heart. As he skulked into the dining-room, he heard singing in a neighboring apartment. Through an open door the observer caught a glimpse of a soft, green brightness as from a window full of plants ; and in the midst, the same slender form that had passed him on the street.

The young girl was seated at the feet of an invalid, helpless in his great chair. Her face was turned away so only the coils of bright brown hair at the back of her graceful head, and the curve of her white neck, were visible. But satisfaction illuminated the pallid and attenuated features of the sick man. There was a guitar in the lady's lap, and a huge pet rooster stood poised on one leg, within reach of his mistress's caressing hand, his head critically cocked—lending an air of quaint repose to the unstudied tableau.

Knox liked it : and he liked, too, the tender and delicate tones that clothed in sounds of exquisite pathos this little hymn:

" O heart of Mary Mother, how wert thou wrung with dread !
 So art thou to the sorrowing a lamp by teardrops' fed.
 But once through the dark future thy way thou couldst not
 see—
 From thy despair, dear mother, calm light doth shine on
 me.
 I, too, have lost my darling. From me afar he'll rove ;
 He cannot dry my tearful eyes, for he's fled beyond my
 love.
 But ah ! he's brave and gentle, and though he hears not
 me,
 I'll trust him, still I trust him, and draw my hope from
 thee."

But none the less did he transfer to his own possession the silver in the sideboard ; the parrot in its cage ; and Mrs. McCross's diamond breast-pin, valuable to her more than husband or daughter. And then, having set fire to the barn, he retired to appear no more in religious circles.

It seemed that the drafts made on their spiritual bank by the Goncussets were not honored. At any rate the revival didn't come off. In vain the evangelist promised an opening of the windows of heaven. The very shutters remained tight closed, and were opaque enough to be of the Philadelphia kind. Mr. Knox's personal peculiarities were noised about with damage to the cause.

Mrs. Bizby, finding that they had prayed the pews empty rather than full, went round and got up a set of mite societies as kindred means, promising better results.

Miss Petingil saw no more of that *ignis fatuus*, her cousin. He had fled Millville for parts unknown. But she soon received a bottle of wine and a letter from him. The epistle announced that he dared no more aspire to the dignity of thief, after having seen Goggle-eyes, who not only despoiled the pockets but the souls and brains of his victims. Nevertheless, as he found it convenient to quit the country, he begged her to accept some veritable Chateau Yquem as a souvenir.

Whereupon the spinster restored to the garret a set of cow bells which she had stretched on clothes-lines, across her doors and windows, and once more slept in peace, not omitting to taste the gift, and remember the outcast in her daily orisons.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM GOETHE TO GALEN.

"I'll pat little pussy, and then she will purr,
And thus show her thanks for my kindness to her."



FANCIS HAYTHORNE undoubtedly rose from his tumble an angrier man than he fell; but his anger was like the third mirage, which has this advantage over the second, that it is right side up.

He offered his arm to Peace, and the two strode homeward in silence. The doctor's third condition of wrath had the element of surprise quite eliminated, and he knew himself so well that, having discovered that he was angry, he could behave as if he were not, which is a very fine thing for those who are equal to it.

But Peace proved unequal. She had nearly reached the Covert, where she meant to spend the night, when she distilled all her venom into one sting. "The Angel Gabriel will return to Heaven without further seances," quoth she.

"Angels have no proper names," retorted the doctor, loftily. "I'll lend you a book about it, if you like."

"Don't be snippy! but you have cause! In the words of the poet. 'The spirit flew in feathers once that is so well plucked now.' To dream oneself an Angel and wake a goose is woe."

"I have no doubt of it. That is, I am willing to

accept (on the credit of your experience) any statement you choose to make."

"I'm not the goose. I'm the nice, good, self-lacerating bird lining your bed with down, according to the natural history. But, I ask again, will Captain Cook, after having been eaten, revisit the Cannibals?"

"Do you inquire if I continue to teach that night-school? Yes, I have every intention of doing so. I expect to enjoy it very much. I had no idea the lower classes could present so interesting a phase of character." The doctor came to a conclusion, previously very uncertain, with astonishing celerity.

Peace laughed. Had she been angling to catch this very retort? "Good night," said she, shifting to her left hand her cactus blossom, which she had recovered in Syllabub, and offering her escort her soft, ungloved right. "*Schlafen sie wohl, Engel*," and entered the house softly, lest poor Deacon McCross should be awakened by the noise.

But sleep was the last thing Francis Haythorne intended. He hurried to his room, brought out his nargileh, lit it, and lay down on the sofa to smoke and think.

For a few moments the tranquil gurgle of the rose-water in the vase seemed to tell of peaceful reveries. But all at once the young man sprang to his feet and ran to the book-case. "I cannot review my evening calmly," cried he; "I live it over, not criticize it. I will seek the companionship of my friend, my Goethe. Ah! living, acting man. What should I do without thee, even if I only know thee in a book! If I could have dwelt at Weimar I would have loved thee as well as thy Karl August, and mayhap mated thee, too." Standing by the shelf he began dipping here and there into the familiar pages. But the wonted enthusiasm

failed to thrill from the lines. In vain he read, "Who hath not sat upon his bed and wept, he hath not loved." Francis Haythorne not only had not wept, but had no wish to. "Who himself has striven to be bold loves to name and prize a hero—only he can recognize worth who has suffered *cold* and *heat*," proved an equally unsatisfactory aphorism. "Once I put my foot on a spider, and thought, 'is this a fitting action? Does not God provide to both of us an interest in life?'" In these last lines the reader found a sting. It seemed as if in trying to step on the spider Mr. Haythorne had got a bite for his pains. He put the poems spitefully away, and gave Egmont and dear old Goetz an ugly squeeze against the wall as he did so. It was plain that the charm was broken. The doctor returned to the sofa, and refused to peruse the legend of the Pariah who went through life with a Brahmin head on her shoulders—much as he had formerly admired it. Connections with the lower classes had now a too detestable significance.

Evidently the reader would do better to be his own book, and it would be quite applicable to dub it the "Book of Ill-humor," in imitation of his master's.

Angry as he was he was stanchly loyal to the facts, and these were two weaknesses lit up in a blaze of light by the night's experience: he was committed to Christianity by that prayer; and to the humiliation of evoking the loyalty of Syllabub by his announcement to Peace.

Since his advent in Millville, years before, the student's ideal of religion had been gradually widening and enlarging. Little by little, as he thought and lived, he had grown in reverence for the example of Christ, and admiration of his teachings. His morality he had never loosened in his habits of conscience, but

His commands touching active goodness and all outgoing benevolence he hated to think of applying to himself. And now he had allowed himself publicly to take the attitude of a disciple ! He blushed with anger at his own folly, but he had no idea of evading the necessity of adopting the distasteful acts as part and parcel of his life henceforth. In imagination he beheld himself forgiving his enemies, admitting the claims of bores on his time, taking part in the reformation of reprobates, and exerting himself in behalf of disagreeable people who are always wanting one to do for them just what they ought to have done for themselves. He must cultivate an interest in politics and the public institutions, and,—most disgusting of all,—the duty nearest at hand must be done, not put off ! Francis Haythorne groaned ! He felt himself in a strait jacket. He threw his dead cigar out of the window, and his hopes of comfort with it. Life was henceforth the stump of a Havana.

The detested duty which Francis Haythorne returned to his sofa to consider, was the conciliation of Syllabub.

There are in this world statisticians, or generalizers ; and poets, or particularizers. The first deal in numbers, and the second in emotions. Now, the reason why Mollie and Francis Haythorne never caught each other's meaning accurately was that they respectively represented these poles of character. The doctor could have given off-hand all the facts about Syllabub that Mollie by reiterating strove to impress upon him. But whereas they moved her to enthusiastic devotion to her plan of regeneration, they only entered as numbers into an estimate of the case which the other made, and affected him no further. Accordingly, what the faintest glimmer of love for his pupils would have

taught him by instinct, he could only learn through mishaps. He hadn't cared to improve Syllabub, though he had always been disgusted because it didn't improve under his ministrations. Now, however, he felt a vigorous intuition of the Syllabub character, as new as disagreeable. From contempt he had passed to active animosity. In the light of his feelings toward his scholars he, for the first time, suspected how they regarded him. Much as he would have liked to stigmatize his defeat as Irish treachery he knew better. The most perfect loyalty to Mollie existed in Syllabub, and reigned. There must be such loyalty to himself if he would succeed, for he was smart enough to see that where abstract principles went for nothing affection was the only obligation that could hope for recognition. At this moment the love of Syllabub seemed to him like a dose of asafetida. But he resolved to take it! He had hardly come to this settlement of the question when a ring at his bell summoned him to receive a note from Dr. Jenkens, which read thus:

“DEAR FRANZ:

“I shall have to start this moment for Cherry Brook, so you must take my place and see at once to Amos Daley's sprained shoulder. River street, No. 156. Miss McCross called here an instant ago about it.”

Meantime Mollie and Doppy and Hugh attended Amos home, and the two women got together washes and compresses for the wounded arm, while Hugh helped Master Daley to bed. Then Mollie came and bathed the swollen flesh, and finally wrapped a comforting bandage about it, and went for medical aid.

“I suppose you aren't sorry for me,” inquired Amos

as she bent over him, arnica in hand, " You're goin' to say I desarve all I've caught."

" I think you do," she owned, smiling. " I was ashamed of you, every one. I thought you were men—gentlemen. You acted like children!"

" Be you mad?" inquired the youth, anxiously.

" No ; but I'm not pleased; I supposed you wanted to learn something—were ambitious. Mr. Haythorne is a good teacher. You don't know how to treat one ! Supposing he shouldn't come down again ?"

" Then we'll study without. In the words of the Bible, God helps those that help themselves," said Amos, stoutly. " The end of his nose is quarter of a yard higher than the bridge. We can't stand his aristocracy."

" It's your duty to seize every opportunity to learn," answered Mollie, severely. " You know it is. Mr. Haythorne didn't agree to teach anything but reading, writing and arithmetic. His private opinions have nothing to do with you."

" That's just what Doppy says," admitted Amos. " You an' her understand how to get around life better than us fellers."

" If you tried to do your duty as faithfully as Doppy, you'd know just as much about it." Mollie wasn't in the least softened by the compliment. " If you had all behaved your best, instead of being disagreeable, to-night, what a nice time you might have enjoyed. Mr. Haythorne certainly tried to do all he could."

" Miss McCross," asserted Amos, in a tone of conviction, " if we would only mind what you say Syllabub would be a small but well-conducted heaven ; but it isn't our nature. I feel something in my breast swell right up, every time that leisurely-mannered

Yankee, savin' yer presence, tips delicately into our quarter. If I had a stone handy I'd like to fling it at them patent leathers that he walks too polite, even to dusty."

"That's not what the Bible teaches,"—Mollie resorted to her usual refuge—perhaps unpleasantly aware of kindred feelings. "You know Father O'Gorman says, people who don't help each other are not good Christians."

"Oh, well, when you come down to the Bible, I always have to give in," said Amos, disconsolately. Then, seeing her at the point of departure, "We'll see how Haythorne acts next time, but I don't look to ever enjoyin' him."

However, until the unpopular teacher read his *frère's* note he had forgotten all about the hurt boy and his own outburst of passion. When he was thus reminded he sharply rebuked himself, and made haste to return to the scene of his late misfortunes. It irked him that he, the lover of politeness, should have failed in so broad a way. Moreover, he looked at physical suffering as something to whose extermination he had vowed his life, and he went willingly to the contest. True, neither emotion at all regarded the human object of his acts; but that was as his nature demanded, and no abnormal condition of mind.

Mrs. Daley's domicil had improved much since her son's forlorn childhood. She had resolved to be temperate a few years before, and with rare strength had held to it. The house, in these late times, had, therefore, been neat; a few pictures had found their way to the walls, and the chairs were in tolerable repair. But try as she might, poverty sat barefaced on each attempt at ornament; onions would savor the atmosphere, and soft-soap perfume the painfully scrubbed

floor. Francis Haythorne found nothing cheerful or inviting in the premises. He was astonished on the whole that the Patience of Hope boys had even that inkling of æsthetics he owned in them, considering the bareness of every familiar scene. At this point in his observations Amos turned his head and recognized him, with anything but a pleased expression on his pale face.

"Where's Jenkens?" asked he, shortly; "I sent for the boss."

"I believe I am equal to the case," retorted the doctor, not at all put out. "May I look at your shoulders? Ah! I see some one has been at work."

"Yes, Miss McCross put on them bandages. She comforted the pain real good." Amos spoke with loyal pride, and submitted to the investigation as if it had been a treat, too proud to display before the aristocrat a trace of the anguish it caused him.

"Miss Mollie is a genius! What has she made her plaster of—soft-soap? Yes, I thought so; it has worked like a charm, blistered the skin, and I don't know what more! However, it's only a bad sprain, aggravated by some hours' neglect. Why didn't you have your mother take that poultice off before it ate into the flesh so?"

"If it had blistered my bones I'd ha' stood it," cried Master Daley, with heat. "Miss Mollie telled me to keep it on while I waited fur you, an' she know'd what was right. It has helped the twisted feeling wonderful."

Francis Haythorne smiled benignantly. Here was the ideal patient at last. The professional element in his character came at once to the surface. He forgave the night-school for the soft-soap, and set about substituting a better dressing. He wasn't a philanthro-

pist, he hadn't been planned for a teacher. He was utterly antagonistic to the commercial spirit. But he was a physician. He exhibited no doubt as to the nature of the hurt. He entered into no technical explanations of strains, muscles, and bones. He terrified by no rehearsal of possible contingencies. His manner was calm and serene and decided, as always ; and here it refreshed his alarmed and wearied patient. The touch of his cool, dry fingers was gentle, sure, and magnetic. One felt after it that so steady a hand could be trusted, and that he desired to heal. His voice carried the same idea. It was perfectly articulated, leisurely, firm, low. His position brought but one change from his ordinary manner. Usually he was uninterested in his surroundings. People went and came before his half-closed eyes day after day, without exciting the slightest curiosity. Much as he loved luxury he never appeared to notice the details of taste or invention that affected it. Peace once said that she believed Francis Haythorne considered it the perfection of good-breeding to walk through the world as if it was without form and void.

But in the sick room his fox-colored eyes awoke, and took in every article, every gesture of the inhabitants, every smallest fact that bore upon the condition of his charge, no matter how indirectly. So easily was his vigilance maintained that Mollie, beholding him at work for the first time, was unpleasantly startled. "What has his mask of insouciance covered ?" thought she. "What keys to our souls' secret chambers has he been obtaining in this long intercourse, when we thought him blind, while he was only indifferent. And since he is not the man we conceived him, what manner of man is he ? To what power does he give allegiance ?"

In fact, Mollie never exactly approved of the Sybarite, nor he of her. She distrusted, because she couldn't read him. His character, which concealed fire and passion beneath apparent sloth, and hers which demanded of its elements repose in themselves as a test of righteousness, mistook each other from the very outset. He criticised her fearlessness—said she was steel, hidden in a dish of curd. Nevertheless, they liked to do difficult work together, which is test enough of both for us outsiders.

All this Syllabub felt dimly, and hence, in its blind, instinctive fashion it held Francis Haythorne in dislike. But in the new role of physician, all these characteristics were in his favor. Amos in two minutes began to give himself into the doctor's hands, and the first symptom thereof was a gush of penitence for the evening's transactions.

"I desarve it all for plaguin' ye," was a confession made before he knew it. Then, with his usual frankness, "but you were awful provokin', that's a fact. You know I never did like you."

"Do not think of it ; I blame myself for adding to your pain by that—shaking," replied Francis Haythorne. What less could a gentleman say ? But, observing in his professional character that his patient was a good deal excited, he administered a dose of kindness to prevent fever. "You mustn't think any more about the night-school. You will get well and learn a great deal before it closes. It is to be the pattern of all future evening classes. You will be an accomplished scholar before you know it."

"Then you ain't goin' to dig out?" inquired Master Daley, relieved. "I thought it 'ud bust after to-night."

"I never give up till I succeed," replied Francis Haythorne, coolly.

"Faith an' you don't," acquiesced Amos, uncomfortably, and swallowed his morphine and went to sleep with perfect docility.

Early the next morning Mollie and Peace visited the patient, prepared to undertake the care of him till evening. Both ladies looked a trifle weary. Mollie from having watched with her father most of the night, and Peace from a sleepless season of reviewing the doctor during the hours of darkness.

Hardly were the two settled by Amos's bed-side, when a boy knocked at the door, and then unceremoniously put in his head: "Miss McCross 'ud like to know if you intend to spend the morning gallivantin'. She ain't goin' to be cooped up in a sick room, and if your father wants waitin' on he'll have to do it himself, she won't." Then the messenger slammed the door behind him, and went off to play a game of seven-up, before returning to Fir Covert and the McCross gray nag.

Mollie rose at once, and prepared to depart. "I don't like to leave Amos alone," said she. "Now his mother has gone to her work, there'll not be a soul in the house. Can't you stay till Francis Haythorne comes, and get the directions for medicine, and the rest?"

Peace was in despair, but not seeing how to help herself, said she would remain, and, as her friend went instantly away, sat down opposite the sick boy and began a vigilant watch upon him.

She was unused to sickness, and afraid some mysterious catastrophe would snatch its opportunity. She dared not approach the bed lest she should disarrange what she couldn't replace. So she only perched

herself, ready to spring up on the instant, and remained still as a statue, fancying his aches till she felt them herself.

Handsome as Peace was, her anxiety lent her immense eyes a terrible expression, and imparted utter severity to the aspect of her exile features. She had heard that bustling injured invalids, so she didn't allow herself even to wink.

Amos endured her stare till he shivered. Unable to turn, he was completely at her mercy, and could think of nothing but Mrs. Dennis's superstitions of the baleful glance that blights sheep, horses, and crops, and a line in his favorite Hiawatha, "saw the fiery eyes of Pawguk glaring at him from the darkness."

He involuntarily reviewed his sins from earliest childhood, and vigorously repented the same. After the first five minutes he had indeed covered his face, but he felt her gaze through his fingers.

Peace on her side did not suffer less; now she imagined him growing pale and likely to faint, now getting flushed and in danger of a fever. In truth the patient's mental trepidation did reflect itself in his complexion. At length the poor fellow could stand it no longer.

"Miss Peace," said he, humbly.

The young lady started up, half resolved to run away. "What is it, Amos? Do you want some gruel, or a poultice, or shall I wash your face?" she cried, conjuring up a vision of a hospital and trying to recall all the nurses are recorded as having done therein. "Are you tired?"

"Not exactly, but—if you would sometimes be so kind as to wink—that is, if it wouldn't be too much trouble (he put it gently for fear of giving offense), it would oblige me considerable."

Peace's sense of humor ought to have been tickled, but she felt too anxious to smile. "Indeed, I think you ought to have a poultice. Don't your head ache? Yes! then it's going to your brains. I think it ought to be drawn away somehow; I'm sure I've read somewhere that that's the theory of counter-irritation."

"Oh, surely! I wouldn't have a sprain in my brains for nothing," exclaimed Amos. "I'm savin' 'em for Mr. Haythorne's arithmetic," and he laughed faintly.

"Amos," cried Peace, with extreme severity, "it's the fever that I'm afraid of. I'm sure Mollie spoke of an application."

Amos had an idea that obedience was the proper virtue for invalids, and he wished to aid the young nurse all he could. "Occupation will comfort her," thought he. "I guess you're right," he assented. "I don't quite know where I'd have the sprain drawed to; perhaps one's little fingers is harmless as any place."

"I'm not certain where—either. But I'll make the poultice first,"—brightening, "and we'll see about that afterwards."

Amos acquiesced, much gratified at his innocent success; but his face fell, when she asked what to make it of. "Water, and—well, I didn't pay much attention when Miss Mollie made her'n."

Peace had already begun pattering up and down, peering into the cupboard and closets in search of the requisite materials, while Amos lay anxiously watching her. "Why not flour?" suggested she, discovering the barrel in her progress, and halting hopeful before it.

"Yes, am I to be pasted together?" meekly deprecated the victim. "Anything you think best, but I'm pretty stiff without starch."

"Oh, dear no. Of course not. It would make starch wouldn't it. How would mustard do?"

"I like things strong," said Amos, trusting, like Micawber, "that something would turn up" before it, was put on. "There are some tin basins to stir it in: and it must be sewed: there's Miss Mollie's cloth and needle and thread on the mantel now."

Accordingly Peace tucked up her sleeves and began cautiously stirring a mess over the fire, with a fastidious fore-finger, when there came hasty steps to the door, and Francis Haythorne entired. He paused at the threshold to take in the picture. Peace as a nurse was a new and interesting study. She had tucked a stray McCross napkin into her neck for a bib, and was clutching the linen foundation with one hand while she spatted and dabbled in her concoction with the other. The color habitual to her cheeks was brighter than its wont, while her eyes, usually so brilliant, now wore a look of childish dismay and helplessness, and her ripe lips drooped plaintively as she wrestled with the difficulties of manufacture, and reflected that mustard was, as Amos said, "sstrong," and should she draw inflammation to the wrong place fearful might be the result.

Never had the doctor looked so lovable to her as when he opened the ugly brown door (the tenement was painted brown for cheapness), and came quiet and self-reliant to take all her cares on himself.

"I'm so glad you're here," she cried, with a great sigh, as her burden lifted. "I never spent such an hour before. Do help me. I'm trying to make a poultice, and I couldn't lay it evenly, so I heated it again; and I'm sure Amos is going to have a fever, he looks flushed."

"That is not right, let me;" drawing the plaster

away from the young nurse he deftly spread and sewed, and enjoyed Peace's attitude of unfeigned admiration and respect.

A little superior smile crept over his face, in view of his newly prized skill; since, too, the advantage was his, he would use it. "What are you going to do with this plaster, now it is made?" asked he, indifferently, as he finished folding and basting the last side.

How humiliating! here, where he was strongest, to fail so miserably! So childish, too. Why, she had no idea where to put the horrid thing. Miss Pelican looked down and blushed painfully as she made the confession. "I thought it was the proper application. (Application is a fine word.) Wasn't it, truly?" She raised her eyes to his in confusion, and seeing the doctor struggling hard to maintain his gravity, dropped them again.

"There, I know you're thinking of all those detestable medical birds, geese and ducks that say quack—and snipes, all I ever compared you to; but I don't mind."

"No, on my honor. I was only thinking what a pity such a nice piece of work should be lost;" here he smiled aggravatingly, and he might have added—"How charming you look in your simplicity."

"I feel so small, and ashamed. I'm a useless, foolish girl, and I know it," cried Peace, altogether undone by his mirth. "You despise me! You needn't deny it, I shouldn't believe you if you did."

"Don't mind about the poultice, I really think I need it," said Amos, chivalrously.

"I'm afraid you don't," dissented Francis Haythorne; "but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm going next to a place where I'm sure it'll be useful. Suppose you give it to me?"

This was worst of all. To be consoled like a child by two young men, both of whom pitied her ! She couldn't endure it, and wouldn't. Without more ado the offending fabrication was tucked into the stove.

" You needn't say another word about it. I shall lose my temper if you do. You can look as superior as you like ; I'm not a child, though—"

" Though you act like one," finished the doctor, quietly, and forthwith busied himself with his patient.

Peace sat silently watching him as he looked at the hurt shoulder, and proceeded to give the necessary directions and cautions. As she saw how skillful he was, and what a trustful look Amos wore, she depreciated herself and deified him—all impulse, as always.

• " Mr. Haythorne," said she, humbly, as, having finished his examination of Amos's wounds, he turned to bid her good-day. " I've a favor to ask of you."

He came toward her at once, conciliating, admiring and helpful. " What is it, Peace ? I beg your pardon for annoying you, I'm always blundering into something rude to you."

She blushed ingenuously, and exclaimed, " Oh, no ; it was every bit my fault. I'm so mortified to think I flew out so. Would you mind promising not to tell Mollie about the paste, and all ?"

How could he help minding, when she stood so lovely and gentle before him, a rose bereft of its briars, her face full of innocent eagerness and compunction, fresh and pure as dew ! Did he promise ? At that moment she might have vowed him to a Trappist brotherhood, and he would have gone cheerfully—that is, he would if he could have made up his mind to leave her.

" Then it is a bargain ;" she frankly stretched her hands to ratify the compact. But the doctor pressed

them with ill-restrained ardor, and exclaimed, "Tell me, Peace, am I doing a man's work now?" Then, as she made no answer, he let them fall, and stood silent, as if waiting.

She still kept her attitude, her head a little drooping, her hands, released from his, clasped loosely before her—every line of her mobile figure expressing self-depreciation, and timid reliance of his charity. Her large, serious eyes were cast down so their thick lashes swept her bloomy cheek. Her flower-like mouth had lost its hauteur in childish dismay. Francis Haythorne felt every fiber in his frame stir at the sight. He forgot Amos—he forgot the past. The whole world seemed to hold—to be, this one woman. He involuntarily advanced toward her a step—then threw his arm about her supple waist, and pressed two fierce kisses on her rose-leaf lips. "Peace, Peace," he cried, holding her fast, though she was passive in his clasp, "tell me, am I capable of a man's labor?"

Then she pushed him off, and answered, with a mixture of simplicity and dignity: "Yes, you are all that is good, but as for me, I hate myself; I am of no use in life."

"Not so," he rejoined eagerly. "You are the mainspring by which I move! I am broken, I cannot go, without you."

"Am I?" she looked up, her face irradiated with a smile as exquisite as rare, and heaved a sigh eloquent of satisfaction. Something in the triumph, pride, and self-elation she saw burning beside the love in his fox-red irids, angered her. From meekness she suddenly passed to sarcasm. "That is what I thought," said she bitterly. "A machine that has to borrow its mainspring is a poor thing. Am I always

to be winding and grinding to keep you going? I decline the task."

The young man turned on his heel without a word and left the house.



CHAPTER IX.

KUNIGUNDE'S GLOVES.

"Rock a bye baby on the tree top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock,
When the bough breaks the cradle will fall."



ARLY one morning a day or two after this episode, Doppy spied Hugh Dennis's trim figure passing opposite her window. It was not time to go to work, not sunrise, in fact. She recognized her old playmate by his free light tread, and a certain erect carriage of his head, quite unlike the stoop and shamble common among mill hands; all the boys who belonged to Mollie held themselves with unusual grace and dignity. This was partly the result of self-respect and self-reliance, partly of frequent contact with the young gentlefolks of Roaring River.

Hugh answered Miss Mulligan's call, nothing loath, and entering, sat down by her table while she washed her breakfast dishes.

"'N' have ye see Amos since?" she made haste to inquire before he fairly shut the door. "How is he?"

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Hugh teasingly. "He didn't seem much sick, but he looked very sorry for himself."

"Oh! I'm so glad," exclaimed the girl eagerly, ignoring the ambiguous aspect of the speech. "I wouldn't have Amos laid up for anything."

Either Doppy's warmth nettled Hugh, or he was sorry for his friend. His open face twisted into a little grimace, and he sniffed. "He's bound to play 'longshoreman, three weeks at least."

"Three weeks!" echoed Doppy in dismay, "an' you said he wasn't much hurt! Why, he's niver ben right sick a day in his life till now!"

"Then he's found his chance." Hugh whistled, and did a few steps of the clogs to relieve his feelings.

Doppy put her dishes down on the table hopelessly, threw her clean towel over the back of the chair, and went across to the pump to lean on its handle and cry.

Hugh stopped his jig, drew a long breath, and then, pouncing on the pet hen as the nearest source of diversion, began by a series of artfully contrived insults to foment a quarrel between it and the cat. Puss being old and irritable, Biddy was soon assaulted. A dreadful squeaking, spitting, growling, scratching, cackling, and pecking ensued, which tickled Master Dennis vastly, and called the little mistress of the house from her tears. She dashed to the affray, parted the combatants, cuffed the cat, put the hen out of the room, and was back before the mischievous fellow had chance to rise from his knees.

"You mean, heartless torment!" she blazed. "How can you do such things. You're a sinner, that's what you are!—a *miserable* sinner! We're all miserable sinners!" After which she stamped a few times and began to cry afresh."

Hugh didn't try to comfort her as Amos would have done. There seemed to be an element of exasperation for him, in her grief. However, though he

sat silent, he looked ashamed, caught the reprimanded pussy, and patted it while he waited till the storm blew over. Even then his love of teasing rose to the surface. "Doppy, yer cat's hungry. She'd faint at the sight o' mate. What has she had of late to eat?"

"Sure you wouldn't have me corruptin' her morals an' she a Catholic cat by feedin' her flesh on a Friday?"

As she made this retort, Doppy couldn't forbear smiling. But Amos was not forgotten. "Mrs. Daley must go out washing this morning," said she; "the place is too good to lose, or even risk. Tell Aleck to go round an' sit wid 'em till I get through at the printing office. Have ye swallowed yer tongue?" as Hugh showed inclination to dance a few steps in lieu of answer.

Doppy was rapidly relapsing into wrath, and the young man found it prudent to make instant reply. "Why, don't you know? haven't you heard? Mike Heffron and his old woman were both arrested and locked up last night, an' Aleck'll have to draw his savings and spend them an' the morning gettin' 'em out."

"What is it for?" asked Doppy, sorry, but not appearing much surprised.

"Oh, you're no gossip!" cried Hugh, a little touch of commendation in his tone. Then he laughed. "They're jugged for livin' together!"

"Why shouldn't they? I'm rale sorry for Aleck! If I could only comfort him! Will you go an' sit wid Amos?"

"No. I'm to give the day to looking for Miss Pelican's gloves. I've talked it up wid Amos 'n' Aleck, 'n' Peter 'n' the rest, an' we've made our resolve to find 'em. Oh, you wasn't there last night. Well, there

was a fight at the door an' Martin Doolan got stuck with a knife. Then, when we'd got it still, Haythorne made a speech. He said it was time for us to show our self-respect, which he knew we had in plenty. An', sez 'e, 'if there was a feelin' amongst you that it was a disgrace to allow such doin's, they'd stop instantly. An',' sez 'e, 'there's another thing, a lady has ben robbed of her gloves ; seal-skin gloves ; an' until they are found and restored, the stain lies on the school as a body. An', sez he, 'you honest young men, will you allow it !' An' he wished we'd all take it upon ourselves to look into it. There was goin' to be a row ; but me recollectin' how kind he'd ben to Amos ever sence he was hurt, callin' every day to look after the sprain, an' givin' the lotions, called out, 'Hurrah fur Haythorne. Long may he wave,' 'n' the fellers took it up lusty and howled fit to bust. Now we're goin' to set on any feller that makes a disturbance in the school 'n' lick him. We telled Haythorne so, 'n' he smiled quite grateful fur him, an' thanked us, 'n' said it wasn't necessary. But Amos agrees that it is, 'n' we're goin' to do it."

"That's first rate," cried Doppy, heartily. "Just give Aleck my dinner. I sha'n't lave Amos unpervised wid care."

Hugh took the pail she held out, and, thus reminded, resumed the story of the Heffrons.

"The church says, once married always married, you know."

"Unless a dispensation is obtained."

"You bet the old woman didn't care for that. But the last time Mike got on a tear his wife applied for a divorce 'n' got it. You know how it is—one or the other allus fightin'. So the police said if they ever

did it again they'd fix 'em. But when Mike got sober his old woman couldn't turn the cold shoulder to him, an' she took him in. Holy Moses ! you couldn't make Mike understand that he wasn't her husband after they'd ben man 'n' wife for thirty years ! So last night, when they had their customary little squabble, the police came 'n' jugged 'em both."

"Just like them immoral Yankees," said Doppy indignantly, "as if a married pair couldn't have a harmless crack at each other, without their huge pale noses comin' in between. Pah ! to think of this foine country bein' over-run wid 'em ! But I mustn't let Mrs. Daley be late."

Hugh, accordingly, took a message from Doppy to Mr. Lankman, to the effect that she must leave the *Universe* to its fate—and the young nurse was soon installed at Amos's bed-side, sewing in hand, and in the course of the morning she helped him to entertain a good deal of company. First Mary McCross peeped in, and, when she had rid herself of sundry rolls of flannel, jars of jelly, and books full of pictures which had formed her errand, sat in the rocking chair a few minutes to rest, and enjoy her scholars. She said her father was better, and her mother in the midst of the revival meetings.

Her presence gave opportunity for the propounding of various knotty questions, whose solution seemed to give her the keenest pleasure.

"Now, Miss Mollie," cried Amos, "what is vicarious sufferin'? I've often heard that word in your mouth, an' I've ben wonderin' if I've felt it all night."

"Not a bit of it. It's suffering people have through sympathy, in the place of or through pity for some one else."

"Nothin' but second hand!" said Amos contemptuously.

"People who feel it forget to make the distinction," laughed Mollie, growing gay in the presence of youth and sunny-heartedness, and gladly forgetting that she must soon return to care and sorrow. "It is all the pain we feel for love of our friends, and also the pain resulting from other folks' sins."

"Them two is most all there is," said Doppy.

"Give us a rest. That counts out remorse, repentance, hell, an' sprains," cried Amos. "Now, I'd just as lief have a vicarious sprain as not."

Amos was much better,—could turn his head and even shift his position without great pain; and Doppy had washed his face, and brushed his black locks, and purred around him till he felt in high good-humor, and full of talk.

"I have felt vicarious suffering," said Doppy, thoughtfully, looking off into the world of memories with recognition on her sober face. "I've lived in it always."

"Then I think you ought to remember its counterpart, vicarious joy," said Mollie; "just as the pain is pure and penetrating, like the rain, so is its twin-joy cloudless and intense, like the sun. Both have in them the blessing of life and growth."

"Miss McCross," said Amos, who had struggled to take in the idea as she evolved it, and who watched her with the gravity habitual to him in repose; "I believe I understand ye as far as ye've got, but I sha'n't be able to if ye go any deeper."

"Miss Mollie," said Doppy, roguishly, "will it be vicarious pain or not when we've licked the night-school into good order on Mr. Haythorne's account? We're goin' to begin right away. Aleck is going to

take Tim, becaze he's his brother ; 'n' Hugh is goin' in for Barney O'Hara. It 'll be as reg'lar as a stand of ninepins, 'fore they're done."

"Yes, after we've made a ten-strike," amended Amos.

Now Mollie had held a war-dance of triumph in that innermost core of her soul not yet completely brought under the law of love. The autocrat had finally been obliged by his common sense to sue the ears of Syllabub as Antony and Brutus did in the war over Cæsar ; and he had comforted himself with the parallel. But none the less had Syllabub asserted its right to be governed, if at all, by an appeal to its highest self. Its champion exulted in the event of the struggle, just as people are glad when their kinsfolk triumph, be the cause good or bad. And yet, in the estimate of life those same near relatives suffer more from our caprices than the outside and resentful world.

But Mollie had no intention of sharing her self-complacency with the mischief-makers. She looked very grave, and expressed her satisfaction at the resolve taken, in elaborate terms, and included herself with her colleague in her thanks.

Doppy was bright enough to suspect her teacher, but with instinctive loyalty would not strive to coax the withheld smile. She would have lost her faith in faithfulness had her adored Miss Mollie acted otherwise.

"Miss Mollie, how many sacraments are there ?" said Amos, willing to escape acknowledging his errors.

"I don't know,"—after a moment's reflection, "six or seven ; I'll count if you like."

"Why, I thought there weren't but two in the Protestant church."

"Protestantism isn't a church," said Mollie, "it's an acknowledgment that there can be differences of thought in the visible church. About the sacraments, I can't number them so well, because some of them are vows we make to God, and some vows God has made to us. There are baptism, confirmation, Lord's supper, marriage, holy orders, labor, pain, repentance, and services of death, which are partly celebrated in this world by survivors, and in the next by the deceased."

"That's the awfullist list ever I see," quoth Amos, in genuine horror. "I never hear of puttin' hard work in afore. I think it's the meanest thing about livin'!"

"I never knew of any one's being good who didn't receive it," insisted Mollie. "I regard it as essential to salvation."

Amos stared at her in silence ; he had not the words to explain his doubts, but looked at Miss McCross's list as "one of her vagaries."

"What's that Doppy is studyin' so careful?" said he, looking admiringly at the impulsive girl, who was bending over one of the new books.

"Whischt ! I'm gettin' good larnin'," exclaimed Miss Mulligan, pushing him off with her hand. "If a ray of light vibrates at the rate of six hundred and ninety-nine millions of millions a second, and strikes the retina, that's part of yer eye, as often as that you see purple. It beats there reg'lar, as yer heart beats, only so much faster—"

"Pooh !" rejoined Amos, "you can mix better bread 'n theories. I've see a feller purple an' *black two* wid just one beating, let alone yer billions."

"Hush !" cried Doppy indignantly. "Here's somethin' else curious, and a picture to make it plain.

When a ray of light leaves a glass that got somethin' in it, it don't go straight."

"I can't see nothin' strange about that," he retorted. "It gets on a bender like other folks, I spose, according to my experience."

"You're rale mean to tease me about drinkin'," the maiden cried, warmly. "You shouldn't *make* little of yer virtues, or they'll grow little."

Mollie rose as her young favorite made this spirited reply, and after a look at the hurt shoulder, and a few directions for using a new wash Francis Haythorne had sent by her, took her leave. "Don't you ever drink?" she demanded of Doppy, who followed her outside. The question was put in jest, for the pleasure of seeing the rich shame-faced blush sure to follow.

Doppy closed the door and leaned against it. "You'll never be pursuaded that Amos an' me haven't took a pledge together," she remonstrated, "but we haven't, true as you're born. It's this way about him an' I. I can't bear to think he'll touch liquor an' every boy in the temperance don't keep to it. But I don't feel it fair to ask God to make him deny himself an' me go on enjoyin' whatever I like. I'd rather give up a pleasure an' make my prayer out of it. So I don't drink; but I never telled Amos so, an' you mustn't."

Soon after this Mary Ellen Heffron entered. Her pretty, frivolous face was a little stained with weeping, and somewhat more with dirt, which she hadn't thought of washing off. She not only wished to console with Mr. Daley, but to crave a favor of Miss Mulligan. All Syllabub relied upon Doppy for help in emergencies, and with good cause. As their visitor sat by the fire resting, and warming herself, she told them that the difficulties of the heads of the house had been compromised. Aleck had brought down the city mission-

ary to the station-house and had them married again. Then he paid their fines for breaking the peace, and they went home triumphantly. She wanted to borrow all Doppy's available garments to wear that night to the Catholic fair, a proceeding which Amos found out in spite of the whispers in which it was discussed. He took his first opportunity to enter a lively protest against the plan, as might have been expected. "Doppy," said he, "it like a rose's trying to put its leaves on a mullein stalk. They're spoiled for her, and devil take the weed."

Aleck and Hugh, however, paid their noonday visit while Miss Heffron was still on the premises, and an altercation occurred between the brother and sister, which prevented the promised loan.

"Did you say you was goin' to the fair wid Martin Doolan?" cried Mr. Heffron, frowning. "He's a sneak, and I don't like my sister to associate with such."

"What's his trade?" asked Amos—"Gold beater? I thought he drove a dump cart."

"So he does—Gold's his horse's name."

"He knows how to keep a good base-ball tally," Amos threw in good-naturedly to help out the poor girl. "He has a short hand invented by himself most beautiful."

"Pooh!" exclaimed the incorrigible Hugh. "How could he have a short hand, when he's everywhere known as long fingered?"

"I don't see why you should abuse the chap," retorted Amos, warming in his defense. "We all know his bargain wid his bos was board, and find his own clo'ces. How could he do that, I'd like to know, if some one don't lose 'em."

"The long and short of it is you're not to go,"

said Aleck, a little cross from his morning's misfortunes.

"I can't, can't I?" Mary Ellen had been letting fall a few tears, as the question was discussed; but Aleck's sharp tone fired her wrath. "Then I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go straight home an' say ten Our Father's an' ten Hail Mary's that *you* won't have a good time. That 'll fix you."

"Miss McCross wanted to know if Mrs. Heffron would like to have her call. She said she could find some work to help out."

"Oh, yes! If she wants to I hain't no objection." Aleck didn't seem highly delighted at the prospect. "It's not mother," as Doppy looked inquiringly at him; "she says now she's broke in she'd as lief have her come as not:—but there's nothing in the house. Father an' she between 'em have took it all down to Good Heart's pawnshop. I don't care—I'll have a carouse to-night an' forget all about it." He sighed as he spoke, and then began to whistle and dance. But as dull care would not be thus driven away, he suddenly stopped, and, spying Mary Ellen, peremptorily ordered her home. He hated to see girls racing the street, he said.

His sister, roused to open revolt, shook her thin shoulders angrily, and said she'd go when she pleased, and leaned against the wall as tightly as if she meant to grow there.

Doppy looked anxiously from Aleck's darkened face to Mary Eller's small features, all puckered into a stubborn frown, and averted further hostilities by the offer of a string of onions, for the five young Heffron's dinner. She carried the indignant sister off to make the purchase—hoping to separate the malecontents, but Aleck followed them out of doors, longing to have

some one miserable. Doppy had been too quick for him ; both young women had disappeared, and he stood irresolutely in the doorway, meditating a search, when he saw his brother Tim sidling up an alley as if to escape observation.

He at once gave chase, and began the infliction of summary chastisement on the young rascal. "What are you doing it for?" demanded Aleck, with wise latitude in the charge ; "and quit snivelling this instant."

"Oh, stop, let go ; leave off, and I'll tell," shrieked Tim, abjectly.

"Let's hear you first," quoth Aleck, surprised at starting an unexpected hare.

"I sold Joe the gloves for a pocket full of mibs," whined the culprit. Aleck heard in a thrill of dismay ; he knew Tim was a young scamp, but he didn't think he'd steal. He caught the boy firmly by his neck, and struck him three or four times with all his force ; then in a sudden revulsion he let him go, and turning toward the wall began to sob. Surely life was too rude a task-master—his burdens were heavier than he could bear.

He heard a quick, light step behind him, and turned round to see Hugh standing a few paces off, his honest face full of friendly sympathy.

Quick as thought the poor boy wheeled, and his passions being still at his finger tops, struck him full in the chest. "I won't have you spyin' on me," he cried, his voice still broken with tears. "I'll be as miserable as I like—who's to hinder?"

Hugh staggered back from the force of the buffet, but regained his balance, and returned it cordially. Then he took hold of Aleck's shoulders, and laughed at him.

"I'd like to hinder if I could," said he, quietly.
"You know I would, al—"

"I do know it ;" answered the youth, after a little pause—his glance faltering and falling. "But, Hugh, you can't tell how hard lines I have. Then this work of Tim's—you heard him say?"

"Yes, I s'pose I did." Hugh blushed as he made the acknowledgment, from shame at his friend's shame; he turned his head away to save Aleck the pain of meeting his glance ; and waited till he should be ready to speak.

"Will you go wid me to Joe's?" Aleck still kept his eyes on the ground, and kicked the marbles dropped by the luckless Tim one by one, into the gutter.

Then, as Hugh nodded silently, the two went together down toward River street to a rotting, falling, noisome hole known among its frequenters as Chain Locker,—that being Joe's old haunt; and were directed to her garret by the ragged women below.

The subject of their visit had evidently been having a grand night, for the floor was strewn with broken crockery, and bits of food, and Joe sat bobbing her head up and down in maudlin efforts to dress the wretched infant in her lap. Knox must have divided his cash receipts with his patroness for she was fine in a greasy second-hand suit ; and even wore some gaudy jewelry at her dirty neck.

The sight of her visitors roused her into partial sobriety—and she kicked a clean place in the middle of the floor, and offered them a couple of boxes, for seats.

"Set down, like old intimates as ye be," cried she, leering at them. "It's like yesterday, when we all lived in the street together. Won't ye have a drink?" producing a bottle. "No ! do you feel too good?"

"Our heads aren't as strong as yours," said Hugh, kindly : "we couldn't carry such stuff and stand straight."

It wasn't exactly what he meant to say ; but the woman put him out of countenance. His heart sank to look at her. Her elf locks hung ragged and snake-like over her neck, and her bold black eyes, blood-shot and cavernous from her night's debauch, had acquired an expression of malice and desperation which frightened him. His blue irids dilated with terror—not of her person, but the life she so palpably embodied ; and he could not recover his self-possession, though his silence gave visible offense.

"Oh, I forgot," she cried, with a rough oath. "You're a Yankee gen'leman, now, far above the likes of me. Why are you here ?"

"We came to make a bargain for them gloves," interposed Aleck, eying the articles in question, as they lay in a heap of rags, that probably served for bed. "Tim sold 'em, but they weren't his'n, and if we could pay ye, and have 'em, we'd be considerable obligated. An' no offense."

The look of friendly recollection with which the woman had hitherto regarded the young men, instantly changed to suspicion. She drew a large bullet, attached to a string, from her pocket, and threw it with such angry force that it buried itself in the table by which she sat. "The man that meddles with me dies by that," she cried, fiercely. "You or any one else."

The vindictive energy of the act cowed Aleck, who sat looking at her as if she had been a snake. But Hugh rose, and extricating the useless weapon, went over to where she stood and gave it to her. "Why, Joe," said he, simply, "we must have grown

a good deal worse'n we were, to go back on you that way. Don't think it."

For a moment the woman seemed touched, but there was no stability in her feeling ; from her momentary gentleness she veered round to joviality, and, unsteadily advancing toward Aleck, tried to chuck him under the chin, as a playful attention. He dodged aside in disgust, and she lost her balance and fell helplessly to the floor. Hugh lifted her up and wiped the blood from a cut in her forehead. "Poor thing," said he, compassionately, "must you allus be like this ? I can't believe it."

The wretched creature was momentarily stunned by her hurt, then she opened her eyes and looked sanely into the fresh, handsome face bending over her.

"Good God, but you was the best of 'em, Hughey," said she. "Here, take yoe gloves ; no, I won't have no pay from you. I've money enough for now. Must it be like this ? Why, this is my gayest time for many a year. I haven't been hungry or sober for a month. I can't expect better'n that. There, you'd best go. I'm what I was left to be, and so's my life, and who cares ? I don't ! But you've the good heart, lad. I'll not forget it."

She struggled to her feet, and threw up her head with its old willful toss. "If Christie 'd ben like you, it 'ud ben easier all round," said she, concisely. "But he warn't, so I abide by what he is."

As Miss Pelican aired and fumigated her recovered treasures that night, and strove, as she said, to take the Syllabub out of them, she hardly thought it the breath of a despairing life, that came reeking to her aristocratic nose. Alas ! the vice and crime that are a stench in nostrils of society, have no power to tell

their story. They are as they were left to be, but what that is, who cares ?

* * * * *

Not many days later, Francis Haythorne paid his last professional visit to Amos, whereupon his patient produced a spruce but lean pocket-book, and pressed its contents on the faithful physician, who refused to accept a single dime.

"What, will you make a beggar of me, that am an honest tradesman ?" demanded Amos, displeased, though the sum embraced all his savings.

"I wish to present you with my services," said the doctor, a little lofty, in spite of his kind intention.

"I only allow my equals to make me presents, except Miss Mollie ; and she strives to make me nearer her equal all she can." Amos spoke with manly dignity ; he knew the value of labor. It had rewarded him with wholesome pride.

"Then," said Francis Haythorne, biting his lip, but seeing no other way out of the difficulty, "take it from your friend—as if I were Miss Mollie—or—or—Hugh!"

Amos never appreciated his victory. He little knew what a descent it was for Gabriel to announce himself a friend to a vile Syllabub boy. But his answer did credit to his tact and his manhood. "Oh, no !" said he, "I do not wish to push out of my place to be *your equal*. I cannot expect to be that ever. I have not your education or your fine ways. But I hope to be worthy of *respect*, every bit as much as you. If you'll take it that way I can no more'n thank you."

CHAPTER X.

URIAH THE HITTITE.

“Trot, trot to Boston,
To buy a loaf of bread.”



OUIS was out of prison. Mollie didn't know it, because Peace and her mother only heard the fact themselves a month afterward. When he was first incarcerated, accidental mention of him was always met with ominous silence, that said plainer than words, “I am disagreeably surprised to hear his name,” and indicated pity, contempt, disgust, or, at best, friendly disapproval, harder to bear than all the others. The hurt to her that loved him was too deep for frequent repetition. Mollie's affection became only more delicately sensitive, because veiled in her innermost.

Louis' petition had been heard. The investigating committee talked much of slatternly judicial proceedings, insufficient evidence, abominable carelessness in legal forms. They set half a dozen men free at once. That did not give them back reputation, or time, or health ; but they were thankful to own their lives again. It might be worth while to note the end of those six fellow humans. Louis is our hero ; of the others—two found their wives unfaithful, their homes broken up, lost heart, and died in a year or so ; one studied for the ministry, but fell victim to consumption before he completed his course, the disease arising from excessive prison discipline ; one began to

steal directly after release ; one was idiotic, and set free on that account.

Louis sat in his cell waiting summons by the Captain. He had a new suit of clothes, the State's gift ; and thirty dollars earned from over-work in his pocket. He was thinking about the jostling, hard-spoken world outside ; now that the moment was so near, he dreaded to go from those four narrow, white-washed walls ; they had held him fast in agony, they had seen his struggles and victories, they were at least a refuge.

Society had not left him unchanged through all those months. I say society, because it is for its benefit and under its direction that prisons exist.

Morbid dread and self-distrust had replaced reflection, gentleness was become unmanly timidity, resolution, irresolution, perfect health, a well-developed chance of consumption. "Set ye Uriah the Hittite in the fore front of the hottest battle, and retire from him, that he may be killed."

The case, however, is not parallel, for Uriah was strong and well armed, and fed, moreover, with a mess of meat from the king's table (which was not exactly Louis' case), and when you say, "Go fight," to a man for the last two years only a shoe-making machine, his battle weapons may well be supposed a trifle rusty.

All through the months of misery lying behind him, Louis had cherished a plan of hurrying to Mollie in his first moment of liberty, and beginning life anew, sustained by her sympathy. His was a tender nature. If any one could know the torture another suffers for his sake, Louis would have reached out and known Mollie's inner life. But, in this world, it is hardly possible for the personal sufferer to estimate the vicarious suffering that supplements his pain.

Now the hour for decision was come, his brain staggered, a cold horror took possession of him. Not the reasonable fear of the future, or dread of present misery, but a terror of himself—formless as to thought, death-like in its chill touch. He had felt it before; when he first entered the solitude of the prison, and faced himself day and night unrelieved by human help. Then Mr. Growing had saved him. To-day it attacked him again, ten-fold more vital. He knew it was insanity; he had seen it come on others since he had been incarcerated. He rallied all his strength to hold his reason, and walked into freedom.

He was seized with a longing to run miles, break something heavy, exhaust himself in physical action. He fled from the prison with burning head and icy frame, running at full speed. He cared nothing where he went; from street to street he sped, for hours seeing nothing, bent only on exhausting his body, and so quieting his fiery brain. At length he dropped fainting under a hay-stack in a field he had reached, he never knew how, and lay there till morning.

He was awakened by a pair of gentle hands shaking his shoulder, and pleasant voices softly chatting above his prostrate form. "Amos, if you'll raise him, I'll pour some spirit down his throat. How lucky I got it for the mince-pies!"

Two pretty lips closed in a bewitching pout of anxiety. Two brown eyes looked out of a coquettish pink zephyr hood, at the fainting wayfarer, and their owner sought in the prettiest straw basket any girl in Millville carried, for the needed brandy.

Amos Daley glanced proudly and affectionately at the sweet little Good Samaritan, as he obeyed. "Ah! he sighs—give him a drop more and he'll

do," cried he. "Here, Doppy, leave him the rest of our breakfast. We can't wait any longer, or we'll miss the stage, and lose our day, and then Mr. Vedder 'll have brought us all the way here in his buggy for nothing. I believe I've seen the man somewhere, but I can't wait to ask."

"Yes, he's opening his eyes," said Doppy, staying to administer a final spoonful of spirits. "How lucky we found him; just wait, Amos, till he can sit up. I know we're going to have a good time, because we've begun with a kind action."

Louis sat up and saw the pair departing. His mind was clearer. He was not yet calm enough to take the right step and seek Mollie. He was afraid to think of it, lest the yesterday's terror should return. He felt, in a confused way, that he must regain his mastery of himself before he could go to his own. But he leaned against the hay, that the wind had blown over to cover him, and ate what Doppy and charity had left, and prepared to return to Toptown and face his first day of sane freedom. To the hour of his death, Louis never shook off the memory of it.

What a liberty! The stare of the passers-by, the horrible hurry and drive of a multitude, who gave him no place, the bewildering sense of purposeless tumult to his unaccustomed ear, the discourteous refusal of work, begetting a sickening sense of maimed power, the weariness and ache that filled his body, the blank uncertainty of everything—except wretchedness. Through all darted a thrill of pain at intervals. Mrs. McCross tripped by in tiptoe grace, leaning on the arm of a thin-legged blond, with dead blue eyes and scraggy mustache—Cymbalinus, in fact. "If here ain't that thief of an Allwood," he heard her say, after a

stony glare from head to foot, "the brass of some
creeturs beats the Dutch."

Half an hour later, Mr. Pelican came walking down town. He wore his scarlet cashmere dressing-gown, forgetful of everything except stocks and orphans. Louis had half matured a plan to beg employment (or rather help toward employment,—he had done with the liquor trade) of his former patron, whom he had faithfully served, but his heart fell as the old gentleman brushed by him unconsciously. What belief could the prison-bird hold, but that he meant to cut him? Death seemed easier than forcing himself on the unwilling notice of respectability, and Mrs. Guise, in the bitterness of her heart, thinking of her dead son and drunken husband, and turning away from the agent of their fall as he shrank past, added another pang. How was the rejected to know that young Guise was gone; he only felt there was no place. He remembered oddly enough about Uriah and Spartacus—ah! they had a right to die; in a wholesale murder a man *has* a right, in a one-at-a-time murder, he *hasn't*. He thought of Sir Walter Crofton and his Ticket-of-Leave men—he lived in oppressed Ireland. There was no such care for prison people in America, at least, none for him. He recalled Jean Valjean, from twenty-five to seventy; forty-five years' pure agony. He had a little sum which he kept doing over and over; thirty dollars divided by five, equals six weeks; subtract twenty-five dollars and emigrate, equals one week; subtract the week, equals starvation; starvation equals four, no, five days, equals death, no, the End. That was something, "The End." After all, he need not envy Uriah. It was the same thing—"That which has been *is*, and that which is now shall be."

No, Messrs. Philpost and Jenks had nothing for him to do. Five o'clock in the afternoon, and cold, faint and hungry, he *must eat*. Subtract fifty cents from thirty dollars, result, twenty-nine and a half; twenty-nine and a half ! how much less it sounds !

He turned down a certain street, where lager beer and horse-shoeing, and here and there boarding-houses and locksmiths, stand together. He knew all the people here, they bought at the Pelibans ; he would see if *they* would recognize him—they did folks of his stamp—prison-birds. There was one restaurant with music boxes, he would try that ; a slovenly, flaxen-haired girl, with a torn pink dress, dodged in at the door. He entered the room—dirty sanded floor, dauby prints on the walls, music-clocks carved with deer, beautiful German carving, but stained and discolored, little ill-set tables crowding the floor, furniture and food fly-specked and gravy-streaked, a red-faced clerk scarcely twenty-one years old, with watery blue eyes and oily hair, behind the bar—never mind, it was all he had a right to now.

A music-box was wound and playing “Home, Sweet Home,” in doleful, jerky wheezes—“Home, Sweet Home” here !

He sat down at one of the tables, and looked over a greasy bill of fare. The frowzy attendant in pink took his order. The clerk, after waiting to see if his services would be needed, leaned superciliously against the door-posts, and crossed his tightly swathed legs in a neat and elegant attitude. It *was* something to be above ordering lunch without liquor. A parrot with a bald head swore a gleeful oath, as she gnawed apart the last string that tied her door, and sidled out. No, the clerk was kissing his lily-white hand to the pink waitress, and didn’t care. Polly toed in over the

pasty floor, making straight for Louis, who picked her up, and fed her with one of the speckled rolls on the table, thinking aimlessly, ready to give up. Some one, old Guise, looked in at the door, saw him, intensified his glance to a stare, hesitated, and came up with extended hand.

Louis, who had been wondering if he would, without much interest, as if he himself were not in the case, rose to take it in a sudden revulsion of feeling. What matter if the hand was palsied from excesses, and unmanned by long years of brutal living, it was warm and human, and the first, the *very first* put forth to meet his own.

"Glad to see you," said old Guise, shaking Louis' arm up and down. "Glad to see you." It was an emotion of kindness that prompted him so far; but he didn't know what to do next, and so went on shaking, and repeated, "Glad to see you—glad to see you—glad to see you, ah!" in puffs, like an exhausted locomotive, and stuck his left arm absently into his pocket.

Louis, likewise embarrassed, wished to compliment him on looking well, but the fact was, old Guise had grown redder in nose and whiter in coat seams, and even to the friendliest eye appeared altogether disreputable. Better or worse, though, he had found an idea in his pocket, which led him to tighten his grasp on the young man's hand. "Louis," said he, bestowing a moistly interested eye-beam on him, "it seems so extremely good to see you, that if I could follow my feelings, I should ask you to take something—but aw—in short, the genius who presides at the bar—aw—you understand, not to multiply words, refuses to chalk it down."

Can you figure to yourself the temptation? This

first friendly touch still warmed his own. Refusal would lock him out into the cold again. It would be a favor to Guise. The old fellow's eyes were fishy with longing. He, the prison-clipped, could grant a favor. After all, what better thing was there than to eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow, a very near to-morrow, he would die !

So they went up to the bar, and Louis ordered two brandy-smashes. No !—the important clerk, thus brought into contact, signifies his recognition appropriately, and thus a second time comforted by friendship's sustaining hand, how avoid ordering three ? The action comes with a flavor of former times—times that undeniably had their charm. Louis, recalling them, pats Polly's bald crown—the gesture, too, is old. Polly, who has clung tight to his finger, piecing out some half-learned or half-forgotten sentence, catches in it a link of memory, as she stands with her head on one side, her left eye's thoughtful ray shut tight, probably to turn it inward. Yes, yes, Polly, hurry ! If your scanty learning has ever use, this is its need. Hurry ! You have it all right ; now's your chance ! Shriek it ! he don't hear. He's watching the bartender ; the stuff is made, you're too late ! No ! politeness gives the first to old Guise, who has had to put both hands in his pockets, eagerness worked his fingers so ; and in accepting a treat from a convict, old Guise would do the proper thing. Scream again, Polly ! that's it ! Bite him ! Now say it loud and plain, with garnet eyes and shaking wings, as you used to : " Dear Louis—dear Mary ! "

" Mr. Guise," gasps Louis, white as a sheet, " you must drink for us both. God forgive me ! I was almost gone." With that he threw down the money he had been twisting in his fingers, and ran from the place

—anywhere to get away. A dozen blocks passed, he stopped, out of breath. There, across the street, lay a long brown-stone length of depot. A train was moving off. Its yellow light streamed into the black, chilly air—against the flickering gas lamps—playing over the brass buttons of the policeman keeping order in the crowd. All these people were going somewhere—intent on something—even to the malformed bootblack, packing up his box, and the shaggy dog with a little basket in his mouth, looking in and out for his master. “Home, Sweet Home,” played the ragged Joe at her feeble, tuneless organ. How the air haunted him. Even Joe had her home. He was the only outsider—Joe could return to her family, her fire. He had nothing to reseek. His place was in the current with the crowd.

“To where?” said the clerk at the office, in a hurry. There was a great “Through Route West” poster, beside the window. Louis saw it and said, “Chicago,”—as well there as anywhere. “Train don’t leave this two hours,” said the clerk mechanically, as he sorted his tickets and snapped them back on the table. One thing never voluntarily slips out of sight without introducing its successor. Louis put his treasure in his pocket and started off on another run. It was a pleasure to hurry now. He had his object as well as the next.

The clerk at the music room had abdicated in favor of the proprietor—a fat, dirty, middle-aged German—and a little tableau vivant greeted the intruder.

At the door, in plaid pants, straw hat and sozzling linen coat, with a sallow face, hooked nose and thin-lipped mouth, guarded by an almost hairless chin; legs crossed, to show his small ankles and immense feet to the best advantage, sat the incarnation of Uncle

Sam, who was saying through his nose, "You can't sell liquor, it's against the law; they've set out to stop it and they will." Whereto retorted the equally characteristic Teuton, with emphatically waved arm, "Can't! can't! I vill bet you leetle money on dat." "Vat ish dish, you vant de parrot?" said he, smiling stolidly at the petitioner. "Vell! you kin av 'im—Knox, he left 'im 'ere mit us, for a bill. But you kin av 'im. I doan like 'im no way. He squawk, squawk, at de mnsic. You must pay fife toller. Dat vas Knox's bill, Knox nefer come back—he leave town sudden—you vunderstaand?" Five dollars. That left only one. Never mind. Louis picked up the cage and hurried away.

The western train steamed in as he entered the depot. He scrambled up the steps and sat down in the first empty seat, Polly by his side—an ugly cage, a miserably bald, ragged parrot, yet in them lay his whole future possibility.

* * * * *

Those familiar with the intricacies of Chicago, and given to board-hunting, will perhaps remember the high, narrow brick house where Wilhelmina Parish took single gentlemen at reasonable figures.

The brown landscape wall-paper; the threadbare parlor carpet, of enormous pattern; the stern odor of varnish lately applied to the tiny piano; the doors scrubbed with soft soap; the hall oilcloth, well freshened with kerosene; the crowded dining-room, whence emanated a lingering savor of onions, pickles, fried pork and cabbage; the black-hearted potatoes and red tea; the cold-bosomed registers, affectionate mosquitoes, flies and water-bugs; the broom and dustpan always in friendly companionship on the stairs; the clammy sheets, and towels washed in the pan with the

dishcloth ; the tobacco stagnant in every corner ; the astonished darkey maid, who swept, dusted, washed, waited, in one duck apron ; did her wool in two pigtails tied with greased cherry ribbon, and adopted vanilla as her favorite perfume ; and last, but not least, Mrs. Wilhelmina Parish herself, who was mistress of her own house, and carved thin and cold with her own hands, Who shall forget her ? Not Louis, at length taking refuge in her tender mercies.

One dollar, carefully husbanded on pork and beans, lasted to Chicago, bought a crust or two for Polly, and left a trifle in hand. But it wouldn't pay a week's board ahead. People have a way of asking board in advance, of strangers, without baggage.

It was nearly dusk when Louis, having consumed the whole day searching for a place trusting enough to give, decent enough to take, rang Mrs. Parish's small brass door-bell.

That lady responded in person, and a strong suggestion of home flavors rushed out into the cold air. "Want board, stranger, pay when you get work," said she, carefully shaking the brownish-black rag in her hand, and kicking the door-mat round with the toe of a darned gaiter. "Come into the parlor, I can't talk out here, all night ! Now, who sent you to me ?" Mrs. Parish stood with her hands behind her and her shoulders against the wall, and spoke crisp and stern, leaving her visitor to arrange himself as he thought best.

"Nobody," said Louis, very humble, "I thought it looked like a boarding-house; I'd ask anyway."

"Looked like a boarding-house," repeated Mrs. Parish, growing straighter. Her hearer blushed and drooped under her withering black eyes, and turned *to go*.

"Why don't you set that poll parrot down?" went on the lady. "Pretty sick business tugging her about all day, I should think. Jest like boarders! They're a shiftless, ungrateful set. I can speak from twenty years' experience. There ain't nothing they're too stupid to do, or too mean fur some on 'em to think of."

"I never lived in a boarding-house," said Louis, in a conciliatory tone, leaning against the piano from very weariness. "I don't know anything about it, I suppose."

"Don't suppose," cried Mrs. Parish, sharply. "I won't have a man who supposes. If he takes a notion to suppose the carpet's dirty, not a patent sweeper rolled over him'd stop it; if he fancies to suppose the butter's rancid, not even sweet cream'd make him think different. If you're one of the supposin' kind, we'll shut off where we are and say no more about it."

"I'm not," said Louis, meekly; "I'm trusting and innocent."

"Innocent!" Mrs. Parish gave him a stare. "You look it without speakin' out. I don't think nothin' of boarders without I've took 'em on trial; but parrots don't tell no lies; they show for themselves. Polly want a cracker? Smart, ain't she?" as the bird made a wicked dab at her poked-out finger. "Nasty temper! I've always set store by anamiles, an' cats don't agree with boarders. If a boarding-house keeper had a cat she lotted on, sure as eggs is eggs some of the men folks would set up all hours for the pleasure of poppin' at it. If you want to stay, you'll find an empty room on the fourth floor, first door to the right. When things don't suit, jest leave, after paying your bill, first makin' no remarks; its against my principles to humor boarders. I settle once a week. It don't do to trust lodgers more'n to pay-night." Whereupon Louis

silently took up Polly and climbed to his lair, with neither misgiving nor anticipation, and, setting his feathered comrade by his bedside, fell into his first restful sleep out of prison.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CLOGS OF FORTUNE.

“My name was Robert Kidd, and most wickedly I did.”

“  F you want that beast fed by me,” said Mrs. Parish, briskly, “jest bring her down every mornin’; I won’t climb them stairs three times a day for no boarder, an I won’t have her sufferin’ nuther! Men ain’t fit to take care of anythin’; you’re off of the same piece with the rest, it seems. Go an’ get her!”

Louis blushed, and brought down the cage obediently, after a short absence. “She’s going to prove very difficult,” thought he, “but no one else will trust me.” Aloud, “I didn’t mean to trouble you.”

“ You can have Polly back at night,” said his landlady, surveying the bird with unmistakable satisfaction, “jest consider how you’d feel, shut up stairs all day, no company, nor nothing to do but squawk, squawk! What does she eat? if she’s as pickin’ as most, she ain’t wuth much.”

“Cracker,” suggested the forlorn owner; and leaving the bird with a tea-cup of the same, compounded with red-pepper and hot-water, daintily suspended in her claw by the handle, and Mrs. Parish narrowly watching the performance, he began another search.

If the unvarying march of nature, “so careful of

the type, so careless of the individual," drives to desperation, how far harsher seems the relentless shutting of us out by our fellow-humans ; figure Chicago's motherhood to the claimant of help ! her bands of music, parading societies, continual fire-alarms, funerals and weddings, always passing and repassing ; something everywhere being torn down, something rebuilt ; the poor dogged, the rich dashing showily about ; the sick without rest, the well hurrying through life at top speed. All one ever-turning whirligig, and every place taken ! Work in Chicago. The reply never varied. "We're all strangers—we don't need you—no references ? The city's full of just such people. All want to be book-keepers or accountants—we refuse thousands of applications every day. Take advice, and go home."

Returning disappointed and disheartened that night, Louis met a tall man with a royal purple vest and a large red neck-tie, who stopped him to ask the way to Desplaines street.

"I'm a new-comer," said Louis.

"Oh !" responded the other, with a smile. He turned back after a few steps departure. "In that case," said he, "would you like to go and hear a little music ?"

"No," replied Louis, half recognizing him, but just missing the identity. "I'm in a hurry for my supper."

"Oh !" repeated the stranger, indicating a decided change of thought by his inflection ; "I see you board at Parish's—she's an old hag."

"I'm better satisfied to stay than leave," said Louis, shortly, and being little given to speak of himself, he forgot to recount the adventure when his land-

lady called him into the kitchen, decidedly the most cheerful room in the house.

"Here! take your pet," said she, grabbing her knitting away, and hooking her up on the poker. "She hasn't no morals worth mentioning, to judge from her gab, but she's good for a week's board."

"I haven't any work," said Louis, guiltily.

"No different from what I expected," retorted Mrs. Parish. "There's no place for fine gentlemen here. We can't afford folks to live on us, we want men."

The smile with which this advice was received might have been *tru*eful, but next morning Louis tried a peg lower down. He had learned his trade as shoemaker, he would live by it; he got work of Hingman & Challis that afternoon, and began then and there.

There was a Holly Tree Inn near the shop, where he went for lunch next day. His finances being low, he took his choice between mush and milk and pork and beans, and, having satisfied the inner man, paid five cents and hurried cheerfully away. It so happened that Beebee, the foreman at the shop, had been dining there also, and he rose hastily and followed Louis out. Mr. Beebee was a short, wiry man, with a gray glass eye.

"Bein' a stranger here, I make bold to tip you a wink," said he. "P'raps you don't know our ways, and that a new hand is expected to treat the room." The glass eye stared fixedly at Louis, while the other wandered up and down his length, and made him nervous. "If you don't choose to solemnize," went on Mr. Beebee, warming at the other's silence, "the men'll all be down on you. I heard Everett denouncing his opinion of sneaks an hour ago."

"But, I can't," exclaimed Louis, aghast, "I've no money."

Mr. Beebee's reply was a whistle, while he put both hands in his breeches pockets.

"Look a here," said he, "we ain't exactly fools, if you are a down-east Yankee, with a baby phiz. We don't belong to no Union, as you may say, but neither do we fancy having anybody comin' in and takin' bread out of our children's mouths. No, sir-ee sir, horse and buggy!"

This was unmistakable. Louis drew his little old purse from his pocket and opened it wide. "There are just five cents there, as you see. I came to town Wednesday, and owe three days' board. You can tell whether I can afford to treat the crowd."

Mr. Beebee was convinced. "Do you smoke?" was his sympathetic rejoinder. "No. Well, come in and take something hot. I'll smooth it over with the fellows. You seem to be a tollable well-meaning chap, after all."

"Thank you," responded Louis, ingenuously, "I am not so ashamed of being poor as I would be of meanness. If the men'll wait till I get a trifle ahead, I will make it all right." So he followed his new friend into a saloon close at hand.

"What's your favorite virtoo," said the patron jocularly, diving into his breeches pockets and bringing out a handful of loose bills, which, if closely examined, would have been seen to be ones and twos. He felt a pleasant self-laudation at thus showing condescension to a man, palpably a gentleman.

"Soda," said Louis.

Mr. Beebee stiffened up suddenly, like a burnt paper. "Oh! you won't drink with me. Then, all I've got to say is, you're a confounded prig, and a liar to boot, and you won't stay in my shop a second after

I can oust you. Johnson Beebee's not the man to stand airs from Yanks working under him and living on beans." From which, it appears, that the foreman wedded observation to interest.

That afternoon our hero worked alone, his arrival being greeted with the following pithy exordium:

" You're hired by the firm, so you'll have to stay till I can rid us of you. But seein' you don't choose to be nun of us, I nor my men won't have nothing to do with you. Here's an order, fill it if you know enough."

Now, Louis was a natural mechanic, and did know enough, which not every man in his place could have said. He took the measurements and began. Hours and hours of unremitting toil followed. He once or twice asked to see the other work for a model, put a few questions, but received one invariable answer—" Lay that, stranger ; if you know your business, do it; if not, leave."

He had to hunt for every tool ; and staid in noons to get a chance to stitch at the machines ; which last was the less hardship, as the one five-cent piece had slipped from his purse. Mr. Beebee had miscalculated his man. It was not many days before Louis sat finishing the last boot. He had set them up in a row on the high bench before him, for the pleasure of looking at them ; his first essay at bread-and-butter-getting, from real labor. It was a joy—tangible, worthy ; he had measured his strength in a man's struggle, and conquered. Mollie's old-fashioned philosophy was written from top to sole, over the smutty beauties ; it was Mollie's love that built up the honorable pride of their maker.

Mr. Beebee might be a martinet, but hate got the *better of discipline* ; his subordinates were as well

versed in his causes of disgust as himself. He had hitherto disdained even a glance at the work of the offender, secure that the greater the failure, the greater the ruin. But that growing line made him uneasy. A tall man with his nose on one side, went to the water-jug for a drink ; and, tell it not in Gath, Mr. Beebee, the great Johnson Beebee, winked with his good eye at him and nodded, and eagerly snatched the specimen abducted in obedience to this Olympain command. The boot, fairly in the circle, flew from hand to hand. It was pulled, and felt in, the heels twisted, the straps twitched, the seams pried out.

“Horse and buggy !” said Beebee, sourly, “it’s ugly enough, but it’s all right,” and handed it back to the thief, who gave it a cursory glance as he rose to make restitution. A quick flash sparkled from his muddy black eyes, and he hauled the disappointed superior by the coat-tail. “By Gad,” said he, “there’s only one place in United States where they finish a boot like that ! I’ve spotted the cove certain.”

The expression on Mr. Beebee’s face on receiving the jerk was ludicrously mixed with the one that followed this remark. He picked up the broadcloth tenderly in his left hand, and his good eye cocked with anticipation.

Formerly, every large manufactory had its own style ; and, in trivial differences, legible to the professional, made its own trade-mark. The cut of the toe, the working out of the ball of the foot, the size, shape, and adjustment of the heel, the shape of the uppers, and countless other minutiae, went to render every shoe house the possessor of its own peculiar pedal physiognomy. Louis, thanks to Mr. Beebee’s malice, had had no guide to the peculiarities of Hingman and Challis ; he had unconsciously made Top Town Prison

boots, from a simple following of previous experience.

"Johnson," said the discoverer, putting his hand familiarly on the foreman's shoulder, "we'll go and make a row with the firm."

Mr. Beebee snatched the foremanic person away, and his divided glances seemed to radiate from an unmistakable "No, I won't." Louis fate hung in the balance. "We're goin' to see the pride of Baked Beans and Temperance brought down," announced one fellow to his neighbor. The feather's weight of that whisper turned the scale. Master and man went off together. Louis, meanwhile, had finished his task, and stood giving his handiwork a final happy survey. Yes, the dreadful test struggle was over! now forward to Mollie!

How is this? Boots don't sell in odd numbers. The missing one, where is it? The workmen gathered in a little knot, and watched him on his knees, searching among the scraps of leather. Audible snickers deepening into exultant chorus.

"You won't find the mate to that 'ere short o' Top Town," sung out one.

"Pity 'bout you, ain't it! I'd ha' sold the tools and treated in your place; 'twouldn't ha' ben out of your line, you respectable Temperance," said another. "Got your affection for baked beans in Top Town," shrieked No. 3, executing an exultant clog dance. "But Beebee's gone after your walking ticket. Pity this won't match," and some one threw a boot at the victim, who didn't catch it in time to save a heavy blow on his shoulder.

The armful of scraps he had gathered up in his search slipped from his grasp, and he faced them half mad with shame and anger.

"Are you men?" cried he, hoarsely, "will you have me starve? Where have I wronged you? How dare you treat one of God's creatures so?"

"God's creatures, excuse me fur sayin', don't go to state's prison, not by a jugful," said one of the apprentices, anxious to have his word. "But don't be angerin' him, bys, them felons'd as soon leave a knife in ye as not."

Louis dropped his head hopelessly. Wasn't it plain, there was no place? He had no answer for the coarse jeers of his mates. He was stunned, dizzy.

He stood leaning against the high bench, with its burden of tell-tale labor, only-half hearing the voices of the men, gazing off into blankness; when Beebee opened the door, bringing the acting partner, too much disturbed to comply with etiquette and send for the criminal.

"There he is, a puttin' on his airs, sir," cried the foreman, with a wave of his hand. "Here, *Mister* Allwood, Mr. Challis wants to speak to you."

"My men have been entering bitter complaints," said the young gentleman. Mr. Challis *was* both youthful and handsome; it was the most beauty-graced firm in the city that he represented. His kindly features bore an expression of marked annoyance, as the culprit came quietly forward at the word of command. There was an air of good-breeding about this reprehensible shoemaker that rendered the manager's task still more ungracious.

"The whole force threaten to leave if you are retained, and work is driving. I dislike to turn you away, but if Mr. Beebee's story is truthful, you see how I am situated." Mr. Challis felt every moment more convinced that he was doing wrong. He showed it in his manner.

"You need put yourself to no trouble for me," said Louis, proudly. "I learned my trade in Top Town Penitentiary, where I served two years for a crime I never committed. Why these men should have blazoned my secret abroad, I don't know."

"Innocent!" gasped the ill-favored informer. "Put me in my little bed!"

"Yes, innocent, Tom Knox! how dare you look me in the face, and deny it," cried Louis, turning on him; "and what is more, I know who is not, and the man to prove it. I've recognized you since the day I came, and let you go. How dare you?"

"My name is William Everett, of Iron Mountain; I never was in Millville in my life," denied that individual, hastily.

"What's all this about Millville," said Mr. Challis, looking from one to the other. "If you know anything against this fellow, Allwood, speak out; I'll serve you both alike. He's been very anxious to be rid of you."

"I have no tales to bear," replied Louis, his delicate and proud mouth curling with contempt and scorn. "I can't stoop to hurt one of my fellows. Pay me my wages and let me go, since you can't afford to keep me."

"I am very sorry," said the manager, courteously. "Of course, you have no prospects? I wouldn't do it under ordinary circumstances. Here are your earnings, and five dollars more."

"I am not a beggar." The dismissed workman rejected the gift as he spoke, with a turn of his hand. "I have self-respect left, at least."

Mr. Challis's open face yielded assent. The tacit recognition helped Louis to face the situation. He could deal with the gentleman, better than the mob.

It was bearing a heavy heart that he began another fruitless search for work. The drizzling, sleety day closed upon weariness and despair. At seven o'clock he completed a walk from the other extremity of the city, where he had gone at the last hour, and rang Mrs. Parish's bell.

"Turned up!" said the lady, opening the door, "I see it in your face, so don't say nothin'."

Mrs. Parish was a thin widow, in black alpaca, who smoked a short pipe, and commonly wore a white handkerchief over her head, and tied in a belligerent knot under her chin. She usually had few smiles for "turned up" boarders, and to-night was no exception to the rule.

Alone in his solitary fourth-story room, Louis sat down—hopeless; nothing but the blackness of death ahead—all his sources of courage embittered or cut off. Was it worth while to live? was it a crime to die? He couldn't tell; he would think it over. The open shutters left the straggling rays of the street lamp free to glimmer through the steamy panes. Only a leap—and the end.

Mrs. Parish, down stairs in the kitchen, counted the money he had just paid her—all arrears, and a little ahead,—as she knew, the sum total of his wages. "Honesty," said she, thoughtfully pocketing the bills, "is the best of all policies for boarders. This being so, I'll take him up the parrot he sets such store by and is too down to think on."

She disentangled Poppy from her chronic attempt on her sewing, and carried her up to her master's door, setting her inside without preface or explanation.

Louis' head lay on his arm, thrown over the chair-back, just in his old schoolboy fashion. Our faces,

voices, minds, instincts—all that makes our value,—change;—but a foolish little habit like this often follows to the grave.

Polly, toeing in through the faint light, found his chair and climbed fondly to his shoulder. She was the representative of all he loved. She had learned to play softly with his hair, pull his ears, lift her wings to his admiration, creep to his touch, lie in his hand. She was his folks—talked to him—loved him.

Every evening in this light, at this hour, she would mutter something—a sentence—in a solemn tone. She did not say it at any other time or place. Her master could never catch it. But to-night the impalpable links of association were all connected; it came out plain and sweet—even to the dear intonation—just as it used to fall from Mollie's lips: “God bless poor Louis, so far away.”

CHAPTER XII.

VALENTINE ROSES.

“ Little miss—pretty miss—
 Blessings light upon you,
 If I had half a crown a day
 I'd spend it all upon you.”



UGH DENNIS was hastening toward the Soloman Rodgers at a lively pace. His bright cheeks were at their brightest, and his blue eyes shone like stars. He was dressed at his neatest, and over his blue-checked shirt wore a pretty necktie, and a pin with a garnet in it.

Every moment his face broke into smiles, as he glanced at a box in his hand, and wove a pleasant tale to himself of the delight its treasure would bring him.

He entered, overcome with sudden bashfulness, as Doppy turned round from her ironing table and bade him a friendly welcome.

“Say, what have you in your paper?” she cried, regarding the twisted cornucopia that he had drawn from its hiding, and stood holding with such uneasy devotion as to be fairly awkward.

“An’ is it roses?” when he eagerly took them out and showed them to her. “Ain’t them splendid!”

“Yes, they are. That’s what I sez to Thomas, the gardener at Cragenfels, where I took up a note this morning. An’, sez he, if you know of a girl with cheeks the like of them, now, and breath as sweet, I’ll cut a bunch to give her this fine Valentine’s Day. So I telled him I did, and here they be.”

“You haven’t got ‘em, an’ all that fine talk, for me,” cried Doppy, in surprise, half modest, half coquettish.

“Indeed I just have, then. Sure there’s no other I could have thought of wid truth.” Hugh was holding the helpless smiling flowers toward her as he spoke, and every word he said was written plainer all over his open face than he could possibly speak it.

Doppy shook back her braids, and laughed. She had a love for such incense as well as any other maiden. “Well, I admire your taste,” said she. “Dear me, Hughey, it’s an age since I’ve smelt roses, and you to run all the way past your shop to bring them! If I could I’d make them last forever!”

The young man didn’t try to conceal his extreme pleasure. “Saints be praised they didn’t wilt,” said he, touching their faintly tinted petals with his fore-

finger, as Doppy began arranging them in a vase. "They're as velvety as your lips look. Who'd a thought mere posies could be so pretty!"

"Now, Mr. Dennis!" said Doppy, with a little drawl, half expostulation, half encouragement; and held her pretty head on one side, as she added bud after bud to the bouquet, so the curve of her snowy neck was delicately outlined.

"I'm glad you like the blossoms," said Hugh, emboldened by her cooing over and caressing them. "You give me courage to ask you a favor I've been thinking of all the way down."

"Why, Mr. Dennis!" Doppy changed her inflection, but her manner enticed him to go on in its very demureness and hesitation, and her laughing brown eyes said openly, "Oh, I long to hear it!"

"I've been thinking to myself—now, Hughey, why not enjoy this night. I've two fine seats in the parquette, in my mind, and if you'll say the word, we'll go an' see Lawrence Barrett, in the Man O'Airlie." Hugh bent over his roses to hide the confusion that seized him when he spoke.

"Me!" cried Doppy, in great astonishment, though the prospect set her pulse dancing. "It's too generous; why not take Mary Ellen Heffron, an' not me?"

"I don't want Miss Heffron," said Hugh, waving off the unwelcome suggestion with his hand. "I shan't ask her anyhow, you know I won't. Just say you're my girl for to-night, an', Doppy, would you mind putting one o' them buds in yer curls, to—to—give me a treat?"

"Of course, I'll wear 'em," answered Miss Mulligan, enthusiastically; "no fine lady in Roaring River *'ll have* lovelier flowers 'n them. How nice it 'll be!"

Hugh departed, with a heart too light to beat in steady time. His feet danced of themselves. The world seemed new made, full of unimagined beauties, and all for him.

Aleck spied him as he turned the corner, and called, "Hugh—Hughey, come here; here's Martin Kelly ready to show us the new step with the flings. Time enough before work."

"No, no, I've other things to think on now," returned the youth. And so he had; what were clogs to a man walking in the clouds!

The very clerk who sold him the precious seats noticed his jubilance, and asked if they were for his sweetheart. All that day the scythes he worked upon kept fading from his sight, and in their stead, a figure full of piquant grace seemed bending over the pot of roses on her table, just as Doppy had bent that morning; and he said over and over to himself: "I wish I could make them last forever."

No other hours ever flew as fast as these. The men in the shop, finding he didn't answer when they spoke to him, nudged each other and laughed, and whispered: "Valentine's Day." And even Mr. Hauxhurst, who, perhaps, had kindred fancies, watched the dreaming lad as he went absently back and forth among the whizzing wheels and relentless hammers, their din and worry shut out by the divine melody ever throbbing in his ears. And yet Hugh made no plans, forecast no future. He didn't even analyze his pleasure. He only knew that he was to have a long evening with Doppy beside him, wearing his roses in her hair, and looking, laughing, weeping with him at the same play. Surely that was happiness enough! At last evening fell; the important business of dressing came; each article, well brushed and jaunty, was

lingerly assumed ; his lavender tie, that set off so well his blooming cheeks ; his shirt, shining from under his mother's iron, with its studs ; his silken kerchief modestly peeping from his pocket ; his nice kid gloves. Then he came smiling and blushing into the sitting-room, and his mother kissed him heartily on both cheeks. "Bless ye, my son, sure, no woman ever raised a finer ! The Lord help me to be grateful."

And now he speeds to Doppy. The light behind her white curtains shines mildly and steadily down the street. Long before he reaches the house he sees her moving to and fro, with a letter in her hand, which she is conning. It seems to be a dainty sheet. She lays it down, and puts her hand to her heart, as if to still the laughter bubbling up from its sweet depths, then again applies herself to the reading.

Hugh crossed the street. Doppy opened the door at his knock, and seemed a moment in doubt ; then, as if recollecting herself, greeted him cordially. A moment later she was ready, had set her hat, with its gray feather, on her thick curls, and donned her jaunty beaver cloak with its fur trimmings.

They went up the street together, just as Hugh had planned. The play was just as sorrowful and tender as he had thought. The maiden watched it with breathless interest, and in the last scene wept, as he had hoped she would.

But after all, Hugh wasn't satisfied ; he looked, and looked again at the brown curled head, bent forward to catch the lightest whisper of the *Man o' Airlie* ; at the tiny scarlet bow peeping out at her white throat ; at her heaving bosom, now rent with sympathetic sighs, and every time turned away heavy-hearted.

The curtain fell. Doppy thanked him eagerly for

the pleasure, and recalled in passionate words all the throbs of sorrow in the piteous play. But the young man scarcely heard her speak. It wasn't till they reached her door, that he found courage to say one little sentence.

"Where are the roses, Doppy! You didn't wear 'em?"

"Oh, Hugh!" she exclaimed, in a tone of self-reproach, that cut him more than could the coolest indifference. "I am so sorry! I beg your pardon. But I was reading Amos's valentine, and forgot all about 'em!"

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CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIE.

"The lickings—the kickings—
The rick—stick—stickings."



Is there anything so sweet as the way in which an Irish lad says, "Mother?" "Mother, she did so and so!" Such a tender, loving, respecting, touching sound it has! She may be drunken, or bad, or cruel, or shiftless; but she is mother still, and her simple words have a stronger power over her sometime boy, than the *ipse dicit* of Pope or President.

I went once to see an official of a certain State prison. He was a truthful man, and he related wonderful stories of the power of human will, pitted against the cruelty—may God remember it!—of his fellow jailers. He told how men were beaten, starved,

made idiotic, and held of less account than the very beasts ; how strong men would take a daily drowning, would hang by their thumbs, would die by inches under all their hell-begotten tortures, month by month, rather than own themselves conquered, give up the will God never meant them to give up, but put into humans to save them. When we thought it was all gone through with, he began again. "I never did much of that," quoth he. "I used to get around them by talking of their mothers."

At Top Town, there was no one to speak to Christie of his mother. Possibly, this was just as well ; a man can't make any more shoes because he remembers his mother. This is one reason why no one thought of it. Another may have been, that the keepers, who were regularly helped down stairs drunk Sunday morning, seldom remembered their own.

Christie was not an interesting prisoner ; his lower face, weak, sensual and cruel, was surmounted by watery, pale blue eyes and a conical forehead, in turn, crowned with caroty red hair. He wasn't even a hero. The next cell to his held a man made a raving maniac under discipline ; *he* could endure. Long practice will mature fine endurance. This man stood under a sixty-gallon shower-bath, and then hung two hours by his thumbs, and wouldn't give in. I knew another, who lay eight hours with two inches of rough steel in his breast, striving to die an honorable, rather than a felon's, death. He damaged his success, however, by groaning once. I remember taking a certain pretty girl over a prison; she admired the flower-garden in the court, the spotless floors, the tireless industry of the men. "How wicked of them to try to *run away*," said she, "when they are put here for *their good*."

Christie didn't appreciate his privileges. What, not enjoy the chapel, so charming, in pink-stone wall paper and wheezy melodeon ? I fear not. He sat crouched like a bear in his cage, and scowled at the world in general, and his overseer in particular. He might, perhaps, have read his Bible, but he didn't know how, and nobody taught him.

From early in the morning he worked till breakfast came, to be gobbled in his cell. Then he worked till dinner ; then he worked till supper ; then he went to bed ; Sunday he heard chapel—was locked up the rest of the day. I believe he was in the chaplain's Bible class. He sometimes spoke to the turnkey ; he sometimes spoke to his neighbor. The first didn't pay him, the latter he paid for—dearly. You think his moral nature must have been starved ? How silly you are ! They fulfilled literally the requirements of Christ, who came to call sinners to repentance. Was he an hungered ? he took his beans to his cell as an animal crawls into a hole with his prey, and ate them in precisely the same satisfaction. Was he athirst for sympathy or human companionship ? they dulled his mind by tobacco, and with pains he could tame as many rats as he wanted. As it is forbidden to set a stumbling-block before the blind, they took care to provide such bad nicotine that its quality could offer no inducement to use. Was he naked ? they worked him hard, fed him on the coarsest possible fare, farmed his labor, worth a dollar and a half a day, to contractors, who paid fifty cents, and got rich on the difference, and dressed him in bed-tick shirts and breeches, one leg one color and one another. Was he sick and in prison, and did they visit him ? They did more. They kept a doctor to see how much torture he could bear without killing him on the spot, and made him a

public exhibition, at five cents a head. When prices went up they put it at ten. With Yankee wit they cheated their visitors at that, for they only gave vision to the insipid part of the play, and no profane Jewess ever appeared to shout :

"I must have my shilling back, you know,
For Moses did not see the show."

No; no one ever saw the show, and, oddly enough, Christie didn't reform. On the contrary, he divided his time between the dark cells, on bread and water, and his own palatial sleeping apartment, trying to find a place not too sore to lie upon from the soothing application of the cat. God is love—to know God is to know love—not to know God is to know sin. Christie had received full education in that. Who showed him love that he might know God ?

But, this is no reason why he should be disobedient, insubordinate. Are you human ? Don't you know of your own soul that it is not enough to have cause for not doing wrong, you must also have a motive to *do* right. Who gave this man a soft word, a tender glance, or even the comforts accorded to a horse or dog ? Consistently emptied of all gentle emotions —leading the life of a brute—he soon sank to the brutish level.

When he first entered he thought all the time. He remembered everything he ever did. He lived regrettably in recollections of balls, frolics, drinks. He panted for their day to return. He even dwelt on a juvenile apple-stealing with Hugh and Amos, and the bone-pickings with Joe and Doppy, and felt soft feelings of his friends. Stretching himself on the cold *prison bed*, his mind reverted sorrowfully to the hall-

ways and empty barrels he had crawled into in days of liberty. He went over Miss McCross's instructions—wondered what most of them meant—wished, in a blind way, he had tried to follow them. This state of mind held two months. A half hour's friendly, earnest talk, from some one he trusted, would have gone to the bottom of his heart, and saved him. Man's necessity gave God's opportunity, but in this Christian institution no one was found to take it. Thenceforth the springs of compunction, affection, or better longing, ceased to flow. One day the chaplain visited him. He was a good man, who said he could find no fault with the prison, except that the punishments were sometimes a trifle severe. The suicides, idiots, and unfailing fruitage of murderers, thieves and felons generally didn't seem to come into his count.

"Sorry to see you here, my man," said he. "This is your first offense?"

"I hadn't orter be, more'n Knox. He put up the job," said Christie, sullenly.

It happened that the chaplain knew Knox. "He always was a thief," said he, "and a bad fellow, too. He's been in every prison in the Union."

"Knox ain't no thief," retorted Christie, contemptuously. "Not what you might call one. He ain't noways smart at it. He's allus caught."

It is necessary to human nature to take pride in something. This is what the philanthropy of this Christian nineteenth century had left its ward.

The Christ carrier hereupon set down the man as a hardened case, and resolved to cast no more pearls before swine. He was correct. Christie was hard—he was also weak.

A strong-minded scoundrel will generally set himself to observe prison rules, and be comparatively

comfortable. Christie was totally incapable of self-control. He talked—he idled—he was impudent. The more he was punished, the less nerve he had, and the less ability to restrain himself. He never was a tolerable workman, at best. Partly through physical weakness, his labor grew every day worse. This did not prevent blows enough to make up for the deficit. He had been there two years when he had a dream. Dante, Bunyan, De Quincey, Coleridge, all had dreams. It is chronicled that the Turk dreamt. There is a tradition that the devil dreams. Then why not Christie?

The jail yard was oblong; on one side stretched the dormitories, on two sides the work-shops, on the fourth, a high wall. The only way out of the parallelogram was through the dormitories. In the center of the yard were flower-beds—visitors always looked at them, and argued that a prison thus furnished must be a delightful institution. Every fine day, the men marched around this garden on their way to dinner. In such a journey, Christie once saw a ladder standing against the wall. He couldn't reach it. In the tower stood two men ready to fire, in front walked the keeper, in the door before him watched another guard. No, it was folly to think of it, and yet it haunted him. Beyond that wall, he knew the corn fields were waving; in them was safety and food. Not pampered to satiety, he reflected on the fresh taste of green corn in the ear. The triviality added strength to his desire; he couldn't sleep for thinking of it. In the middle of the night he strained his eyes to their utmost, in hope of catching sight of a window, and thence the ladder.

No, there was no window, no air, at his end of the tier, *he knew it before.* If there had been, the place

would have smelled better. Three hundred and fifty men, locked up on a hot summer night in one room, with almost no ventilation, are apt to be conscious of their condition. Christie couldn't keep his thoughts from the yard. If, on the morrow, he could run from the ranks—up the ladder ; then he remembered it was a short one, and, in the interval of climbing the coping, the guard would certainly fire ; besides, the lock-step afforded no chance to run. Still, his mind hung about the spot. Though an impossible path, it yet led to liberty. He could hardly work for stealing forbidden glances thither. There it stood all day ; he felt that he must scale it. His hollow cheeks were hot and red with excitement, his poor mashed body grew once more elastic with hope of liberty, comfort, life.

That long night was spent in delicious plans, visions, fears. In the teeth of certain failure he dreamed of success. Waiting for daylight, he thought of Joe penitently ; and, forgotten by the world, dared to aspire to happiness. The next morning, his nervous hands would hardly do their office. He trembled as he descended the stairs. He looked at the spot. It was empty.

Hot tears dropped from his eyes ; the futile imagination of relief that crowded his heart turned to sullen resentment. "Won't work ?" said the overseer, inquiringly. He had an idea that Christie had forgotten his last incentive to application. The day was burning, the night's excitement had terminated in a throbbing headache ; wretchedness, disappointment, hunger, despair, all combined ; the man laid down his tools—didn't cower beneath his master's glance, as usual. "No," said he, "I'm done workin'."

I don't know whether the official was sorry or

glad, I only know the result—an eight days' chaining by the wrists to the stone floor of a dark cell, which brought him to terms and lung fever at once, and at this result of Christian Civilization we will leave him.



—••—

CHAPTER XIV.

UNDER THE DAISIES.

“Old Trot’s dead.”

EACON McCROSS lies cold in the parlor, with the fragrance of his dear lilies floating about him. His face is composed and happy; his once nervous hands, grown calm and still forever, clasp a cluster of autumn rose-buds, those simplest, wisest symbols of eternity. His winter has passed, the tender grape has appeared, the pomegranates are budded. “Oh, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and thy foundations with sapphires, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.”

Mollie sits by the dead, mourning—not his loss, she is glad he is at peace—but his miserable life. A life which she cannot deny, to herself, has been an utter failure. Her loneliness has not come home to her; it will rise up from the open grave, and wrap her about like a garment, when they lower the coffin.

Mrs. McCross is not present. Cabby has entered softly at the front door, and the two are closeted in the sea-green sitting-room. The bereaved wife has *been crying* over her smelling-bottle, and her limp

ringlets are all put up on curl papers for the funeral. Miss Petingil is hard at work on the mourning upstairs ; pending its finishing, the widow wears a mignonette-colored wrapper, trimmed with gros-grain silk, and a cherry tie, and she is gushing at her visitor with all the vivacity of sixteen. Just now, however, matters have deepened into grave interest. "I am certain that property amounted to fifty thousand dollars," she says, engagingly. "His papers were all in yonder cabinet, in a box ; and here are his keys. This fits, I believe."

Cabby was instantly on his knees trying them; not one matched the lock. "I don't understand it," cried the lady, kneeling beside him, with her head almost on his shoulder. "Poor Elizur was very careful about his business affairs. I wasn't much bigger than a kitten when he married me ; he was a good deal older than I—I felt the difference," with a look of simple candor at her companion ; "but it's a great comfort to me to remember that he was always a good provider."

Mr. Brown paused from his efforts, long enough to lisp a compliment, which Mrs. McCross acknowledged by a simper. "I'll take out the upper drawer," said she, "and then you can put your head in, and find the papers."

But the investigation was unsatisfactory. Nothing in the indicated spot—nothing anywhere—but a half-used check-book, apparently forgotten by its owner.

Mrs. McCross snatched it, and hastily turned its useless pages. A name, and memorandum attached, dated a few months previous, struck her eye—"April 30th, to Dr. Perfect, \$100—as a comfort for disappointing him about my memorial church."

"Disappointing him about my memorial church !"

Mrs. McCross laid down the book, and her beloved pastor's doom with it.

"Mr. Brown," said she, plaintively, "if you will go into the parlor and condole with my daughter, I will take a mother's privilege and look through her private desk."

Accordingly, Mollie's sorrowful musings were interrupted by the dandified bore, whose very presence was an insult to the dead. But Cymbalinus Adolphus had not "traveled in Europe" for nothing. He seated himself and began complacently pouring forth a stream of consolation, as meaningless as tiresome.

The young girl heard him with listless inattention for a few moments. It scarcely entered her mind that *he* should presume to attempt to comfort *her*. She sat with her face in her hands, waiting passively for his removal from the neighborhood, till all at once she heard her mother's step in the room above—her room. It could not be—yes, it was—too plain for doubt! The daughter knew instinctively why she was there. She suddenly raised her head and looked the despicable pettifogger full in the eye. She was getting desperate. Her breath went and came pantingly—her nostrils worked like a stag's in the hunt.

"Mr. Brown," she exclaimed, rising—as she always did when excited, "if you have come to arrange plots with my mother to wrest from an unfortunate man the rights withheld from him so long, you are too late. My father put all his papers into Squire Hitchcock's hands a week ago, and if his will be your attraction here, it will be read in this house next Monday, when you can hear it at leisure. Now, have the kindness to leave this room free to my dead and me."

"I assure you, I protest that I had no nefarious *end in view*," cried Mr. Brown, aghast, and let us do

him justice, he told the fact. "Mrs. McCross requested my attendance, professionally, to give legal aid in the settlement of her husband's affairs."

"I hope you speak the truth," said Mollie, slowly. "God forbid that I should be unjust in this presence." Her eyes filled with tears. A dreary sense of her friendlessness came over her. She dashed them and the thought away. "If you are a man, go!" she cried, imperiously, and the contemptible time-serving little puppet sneaked off.

Mrs. McCross overheard the command, pausing conveniently outside the door, and, afraid to rouse her daughter further, let him slip through the gate before she remembered her recent discovery; but bethinking her in time, she hung girlishly over the fence while she worded a telegram to Mr. Growing, to officiate at the funeral; then, hastening to Miss Petingil, she made careful explanation that she had always felt a want—a lack of the spirit—in the Perfect's ministry, especially their ministry to affliction. No one, in fact, could soften the sorrowing heart like her former beloved shepherd.

Next day the funeral took place. Peace came down from Top Town with her father. She looked anxious and fretted—had taken a district school to teach, and quarreled by letter with her brother Charley over a copy of *Vanity Fair* he sent her, which she considered a fling at her temper. But the old gentleman beamed benevolently, and in sympathetic absence of mind actually wore two black neckties at once to the interment. He likewise walked cheerfully out, and tried trotting horses at Captain Slocum's during the interval before service; sugared his beefsteak, instead of salting it, at the breakfast table; visited the

orphan-asylum, and gave five dollars to an interesting rogue at the jail.

Miss Pettingil, relieved of her professional duties, ambled about with all imaginable briskness, being, indeed, as she told Peace, "too contemptible smart for anything." She also confided to that young lady that she was always glad to be in the house with two friends, for if she couldn't aggravate one she could the other. As for the rest, she had fallen heir to most of Mollie's colored dresses (Mrs. McCross traded all hers off to a Jew peddler), and might well be joyful.

Mr. Growing—friendly—full of out-growing sympathy and unobtrusive good service, went quietly in and out among the household. He brought with him an atmosphere of gentleness and refreshing. He was a man who loved goodness for its beauty, and, never entering a household unasked, his influence bent the most warped and gnarled natures into straightness—unconsciously to themselves. In his presence the widow was unable to scheme, and the orphan had space to mourn.

Late that afternoon the procession moved solemnly up the Turk's Head to the old, quaint God's acre, and there, with a few prayers for his soul, a few petitions for the living, amid the springing turf and purple daisies, with the busy little city that held his life work imprisoned among its stones quiet and white in the distance, where the cedars of the mountain looked down with grave friendliness, and the butterflies flitted fearless over the field, where the orioles would build year after year, and the red evening sun be every night God's warm benediction, they laid him to sleep. And Mollie, fainting in the struggle of human existence, and standing there with none to help, *felt a dreary certainty that his was the better part.*

There was a little pause while the sexton struck his spade into the mold, and with every nerve strained to agony, she gathered herself to bear the dull thud of this first shovelful of earth. But before it came Amos and little Doppy hurried forward, frightened at their temerity, and the girl let fall into the grave an apronful of fragrant flowers. Then, without daring to raise their eyes the pair drew back and disappeared.

* * * * *

Monday saw the family all convened—more than all, to Peace's thinking, but not Mollie's dread.

Mr. Brown supported Mrs. McCross, who was tearful, but interesting; and between the constant play of fascination exercised on her attendant, and occasional glances of malignant disgust directed at the drooping form by the window, she was unable to appear conscious of the proximity of the remaining personalities.

Miss Pettingil had ambled in for the reading, spectacles and snuff rampant. She wouldn't lose a single shade of emotion—not she. The tenderness which made possible the life pain out of which she had learned to cognize kindred feeling was long before crushed in the grasp of her master-passion.

Mr. Growing sat near Mr. Pelican. Both gentlemen had resolutely shut their eyes to Mrs. McCross's hints, and staid to the reading—and that without explaining their reasons—which accounts for her being oblivious of them. Fred, however, was rosy, good-tempered, responsive to the best sides of the situation, and felt himself quite in place. He was perusing his favorite Greek original of the Pauline epistles, and conversing over the top of it with his neighbor. When he entered the room that afternoon he brought

a little bouquet, which he laid, as he passed her, in Mollie's lap, but his fine tact withheld him from uttering a syllable, to-day, when all words jarred.

Mr. Pelican, sitting well back in his chair, holding his newspaper a full yard from his nose, his favorite gold-headed cane by his knee, looked full twice as obtuse as usual. He was a dull man in some things, and, like most of his kind, could wrap himself in stupidity as in a garment.

Squire Hitchcock, decidedly flushed with importance, sat glorious in a yellow vest, with the Will, tightly rolled up and tied with bright pink tape, in hand. He was mentally weighing the company. No solicitude for the suffering daughter disturbed his self-conscious complacency. He was jocose with the strangers, as having a common ground of intelligence; coarsely amused with Mrs. McCross's airs, and inwardly delighted at her impending humiliation. Miss Pettingil's presence was his sole annoyance. There she was, body and spirit, just in the way of absorbing the whole delicious tit-bit of gossip, and none to hinder ! He wondered at her indelicacy.

Peace felt too much incensed with Mrs. McCross, and with her father for refusing to care, to take in the other items.

Cabby, behind doing the agreeable to the madam, only balanced Miranda against Euphemia; and the Cupid in his mental picture had rigged scales, Troy weight, out of his eye-bandages, and altogether occupied himself with bank stock and mortgages.

“A lack of imagination is the great reason for the existence of crime,” said a wise old lawyer. If these people could only have pictured themselves ! But, Mollie, who was the center, and held an electric thread of sympathy with each, gathered the rude shock from

every personality. By terrible clairvoyance she read all their thoughts. They seemed like figures in a nightmare to her. She dared not assume the place Peace silently pointed by her side. The name she would fain have consecrated to honor, was to receive irretrievable stain. Her poor, helpless father! How could she bear it when she loved him so! She wondered if he was hovering near—to hear their words—felt conscious of his presence. Every syllable enunciated by the reader with slow and weighty huskiness was a double stab—for him—and for herself.

“I, Elizur McCross, of Millville, do make and declare this my last will and testament.

“Item third:—And, furthermore, I do hereby give and bequeath all my lawful property to my wife, Miranda Price McCross, and to her heirs. But, whereas, at this time of writing I am in possession of certain lands, bonds and stocks, amounting in value at date to \$50,000 (fifty thousand dollars), as per schedule annexed, which lands, bonds and stocks are not mine, but were left me in trust for Louis Allwood, known to all men under that name, by his father, Earnest Allwood, at his death; said lands, bonds and stocks being the sum total of the property left at decease of said Earnest Allwood; and, whereas, I have unlawfully detained said lands, bonds and stocks in my hands, the lawful majority of said Louis Allwood being now three years past—I hereby declare that said lands, bonds and stocks are his, and neither I nor my heirs have any right or jurisdiction over them whatever.”

(Signed) “ELIZUR McCROSS.

“Declared my last will and testament, and signed at my request, and in my presence, and in the presence of each other, by.

FREDERICK RUTTER GROWING, { Witnesses.
ABIMELECH PELICAN.

* * * * *

“ Lie still, lie still, sweet love,
 Make no loud sound,
 Keep thy soft slumber.
 I fear that danger’s trooping round
 Thine hours may number.

“ So fierce and hot thy raging—
 Then asleep—
 Thy pulse I scarce feel beating,
 Only that nothing worthy, true or deep
 Earth holds, and thou wert fleeting.

“ Dear love—cherished for thine own self
 Exquisite passion,
 Still in my thrilling soul thy value is.
 Not that I joy, but that thy power doth fashion
 For him—my lover—a long future’s bliss.

“ Then lie still, love ; breed not my death nor madness!
 Nestle deep in my heart.
 Only awake should any dare come nigh thee,
 For he and I must part.
 And I am faint with love, and I must live,
 If his true wife I’d be.”

That was Mollie’s song years before, when she gave her lover to his untried experience and Top Town.

But this was what Peace found in her writing-desk as the result of the interval, though of these things words do not show the emotion even—far less the cause. Words are only indices which say—“ for comprehending such a subject in such a connection, turn to such a page of yourself.”

“ A little maid at a cottage door,
 Sunbeams aslant in a golden shower,
 A whirring wheel with its busy power—
 Spinning—spinning.

A village lad with his boyish grace,
And the maiden's heart hides his sunny face ;
Sweet rustic love, or the world's brave race !
Spurning, spurning.

An empty life—an idle wheel,
Weary awaking, and none to heal ;
A heart plaining ever its drear appeal—
Yearning, yearning.

A strong up-getting—an earnest will—
Resolved self-mastery—other folk's ill ;
Work, work, work, the brain still—
Earning, earning.

Peace out of labor—rest in the heart,
Little to comfort—nothing to smart ;
Treasures in heaven—no earth to part—
Winning, winning.

Mollie would not hurry from the ashes of her dead
—even into happiness. Her conscience should not tell
her that she flung the old habits off in a day. She
felt no wish to lay by her pain in unseemly haste.
There is a quality in loving suffering that makes dear
to us even a yoke borne patiently.

She had waited a month, till the grass began to
spring upon her father's grave, and then written to
Louis at Top Town that death had released her from
her promised attendance on her father. She was free
and ready to render herself and all that was his to his
keeping. Her letter was returned, with this penciled
memorandum:

“L. Allwood discharged—whereabouts unknown.”
Then the executors of Deacon McCross's will ad-
vertised. But Louis, who was making shoes on five-

cents-a-day lunches, didn't read newspapers, and Mollie waited in vain.

She had been kind to poor Peace's ill-doing brother, with a secret thought beneath every other, that she was fitting herself one day to render the same help to her lover. But now he was out of her help.

Miss Pettingil came along about this time with some intent of consolation. "You look purty sober, Mollie," quoth she, "but I'll lay it ain't all sorrow for your poor pa."

"Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies," said Mollie, ensnailing herself with all possible expedition.

"Oh, well ! I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Youth is a time of vain imagination ; reality is better when you come down to it. Probably you'll say so, too, after you git there !"

"I took tea at the McCrosses," said Peace to Mrs. Hauxhurst, formerly Susy Jenkins, whom she visited during Thanksgiving vacation. "Ma McCross was more than usually unpleasant."

"Chronic !" laughed Susy, folding some small, fine linen articles, and a bit of flannel embroidery. "Did she beg you to embrace Brownie ?"

"No ! when we were all at table she asked me if I had noticed how dreadfully anxious Mollie was become to be settled in life. It is only her natural obstinacy that prevents her accepting some of her numerous suitors," said the old thing, "because they've all sounded ME first."

Peace, whose humor had come to the extract-book stage (infallible symptom of tender melancholy), one day discovered and carried off gleefully the verses hereto prefixed—sad as they were, the product of hap-

pier days. Mollie was too woeingly wretched to make verses now. She still filled up her time with her poor people, her domestic cares, and attentions to her friends, and waited.

Love acting, bearing, suffering, is strong. But love forsaken—forgotten, yet living—God pity it! Formerly in all her pain she had felt an exultant sense of power. Nothing was too great to endure for Louis. But now she had lost him—perhaps forever.

The answer to a knock at certain convent cells is not “come in,”—but “forever.” “Forever,”—the one sublime expression of language—comprehending in itself infinity of joy or pain, or worst of all—lack. Do you understand what it is to lack forever?

“ Above all heights is rest,
In all the tree tops
Thou can’t hardly see a breath.
The birds in the woods are silent—
Wait but a little—soon thou shalt rest also.”

This was what Mollie had said when she was in action—intent on her mission. Beloved Goethe, didst thou find rest? O sophism! such rest is, indeed, above all heights to those who need it.

But Mollie was finding a different password through the lines of adverse circumstance, in companionship with a fellow butt alike of wit and misery. “Any road, even this simple Entepfulil road, will lead you to the end of the world.” So said the melancholy tailor, so say I.

CHAPTER XV.**PEACE WRESTLES WITH ADVERSITY.**

“As forth I walked in the early morning,
 A little bird in nest I heard prepare to move ;
 And thus she sang, ‘Good people all take warning,
 Time quickly flies. Oh, then be wise and time improve.’”



On Peace's return to Top Town she plunged into her hobby of teaching with her accustomed vigor. It is true she owed her place in the sixth district school (Room No. 3) to the liquor interest, but she didn't know it, so it was no harm. When, with beating heart, she rapped at the office of the acting trustee, and asked for the place, the good man laughed, as if it were a fine joke, and flatly refused. “The rich Abimelech Pelican's daughter teach !” said he, “ha ! ha ! ha !” And no argument or entreaty could move him. “Does your father know you've come for a situation ?” he cried. “I wonder what he'd say if I gave it to you.”

Peace held her tongue and her composure till she had made her exit ; but once home the torrent of her wrath and disappointment had free course. She detailed her woes to the family circle, and in the midst of the story began to cry; then stamped with anger because she had wept, and said she wished the trustee, her relations and herself, yes, everybody, were dead.

Mr. Pelican uncrossed his natty black legs and *frowned* behind his newspaper. He was the most in-

dulgent of fathers, and his daughter's troubles touched his heart. He put aside his missionary projects to arrange the means of gratifying her. Perfectly conscience-free in the matter of the liquor trade, Peace's loathing for the family wealth didn't rebuke him. Indeed, he was unable to realize her feeling in any degree whatever. But he thought her plan of earning her own living a nice and practical form of pleasuring—and much more economical than the trip to California and the winter at Washington, which had both been hanging over him like the sword of Damocles. Accordingly, he tucked his paper into his coat pocket, under the impression that it was his large silk handkerchief—he thought it felt very oddly—and sallied forth to a friendly conference with the obdurate trustee. What passed this deponent saith not, but the very next Monday witnessed Miss Pelican's début among the infants under Mr. Baker's charge. There were seventeen rooms in that school, and every room held fifty children, who all smelt either of fried potatoes or garlic ; moreover, in Peace's particular kingdom those of German extraction brought pretzels in their pockets (the other nationalities preferring chewing-gum), and many dressed their hair with mutton-tallow, especially the darkies.

Peace went to her new scene of action with a buoyancy of spirit that astonished herself. Till she had cast it off she had never known the full weight of self-reproach life on the earnings of the *Cereus* caused. To see her brother Charley, so handsome, impetuous, and merry, slowly ruined, bitterly remorseful, and finally exiled to begin life anew in a distant city ; to watch with anguished fascination the slow destruction of those whose purses filled the family coffers, and feel herself implicated in the guilt of their fall ; to know her-

self bound to her life of wicked connivance in all, by her helplessness and sloth, had been suffering enough to break down a nature less vigorous than hers.

But the sight of Francis Haythorne, manfully taking on the labors and burdens of life, in spite of her taunts at his self-indulgence and hatred of care, had given her energy to break her own chains, and she would never give up her new freedom.

Now she was at peace with herself ; the long-delayed step was taken. Life smiled. For almost a fortnight the teacher sailed about in perfect beatitude, and said her daily prayers to heaven in grateful fervor that it had helped her to help herself. "And now," she would say, rising from her knees and casting a disdainful glance at a photograph of the Sybarite stuck in the mirror, "if teaching the young idea to shoot isn't harder than giving it pills, I undervalue medicine."

She paid her first month's board to her mother with simple satisfaction, and felt, when she opened an account at the five-cent savings bank, as rich as all the sons of Jewry.

But soon the pavilion of economical content (scanty in the nature of things), began to admit winds of discomfort, not to say adversity.

Peace was not a conspicuous logician, but she had a very clear idea that having set out to be free of drink money, and to surpass the labors of Francis Haythorne, she must practice a great deal of self-denial. She began with her wardrobe, and felt delightfully heroic when she replaced silk by merino, and bought and made two calicoes with her own hands. Then boots—no, she could not go *mal chaussée*—even in moments of enthusiasm !

/ *But the Pelican laundress ironed the prints on the*

right side, so as to impart such a fine, whitish glaze as only a city laundress can ; and button-boots wear out. Paper was another item. No more crests and monograms—cheap and neat unruled, at twenty-five cents a quire, must henceforth fill her inlaid writing-table. It cost her a pang to realize it—but how much harder it was to bid farewell to silken hose at seven dollars a pair, and embroidered kerchiefs at ten each. Peace would not have been Peace could she have resigned all these without a sigh. She needed them to express her love of delicate completeness,—artistic finish—not from any vulgar sense of possession. But there came a day when vanity was wounded in a very tender spot, and after laboring a black Saturday morning at a torn and grimy heap of kids, she threw her phial of ammonia and her rubber glove-cleaner into the closet, and knew that the image of Mrs. Hobson Newcome, in dirty gloves must henceforth stare from her ideal of herself. Unlimited Jouvins and Alexanders are not for preceptresses of youth in Number 3's.

Then there were concerts, books, lectures, candy, and (expense overtopping all others in female account-books—and Peace now kept such a volume) car fare ! Dear symbol for beggars' pennies, and saucers of cream; for knots of worsted and yards of ribbon and lace;—representative of all that woman desires most, the shining shower of silver that falls unreckoned from a full purse and a lavish hand ! Such a hand as Peace's—that hated to hold back, and clenched the fist that must close over its scanty dole of coin !

But, perhaps, the books were the saddest privation. It is easy to say, “I will devote my time to Gibbons' *Decline and Fall*, and *Stow on the Bible*, and waste no precious moments over trash.” At the end of three

months' solid aliment, Peace, the dignified, might have been seen at two o'clock one night, devouring a pile of Beadle's dime novels, left behind by Master Charley. In the play of her stimulated fancy, she felt that she had undervalued her brother's taste ; she even modified her opinion of the "*Bucket full of Blood.*"

It may be thought that the task of teaching in a model district school is a sinecure. But those who have served an apprenticeship thereto know better. Peace's labors were conducted on the elaborate system known as "Methods ;" which seems to mean telling a child all it ought to know of its own common sense. Colored chalk, and brilliant beads, strung on wire, to initiate the youthful mind into numbers; and singing-lessons to be given, irrespective of the teacher's voice; and calisthenics, and Webl's word method, and a chart to draw from, and a metronome to write by ; all these things did I behold, these and many left left untold, whenever I visited Peace in her day nursery.

The perfect teacher must have imagination enough to recall the emotions of extreme infancy. She must be able, from a loving and trusting heart, to overlook the fact that little girls are natural tell-tales, and possess a capacity unfathomable for sleight of hand and deception, and that little boys are idle, mischievous, prone to bullying, and too often vulgar. One must civilize both sexes from the lowest point of morality, and shroud revelations of character in discreet silence. One must have no objection to kisses of a rheumy nature from one's most double-dealing Delilahs. One must remember accurately, every Friday night, which marble belongs to Jack, and which to Harry. One must never *seem weary, or sad, or too smiling.* One must expect to

whip one's favorite boy. One must see all, but never be perceptibly on the watch. One must criticise oneself outside and in—every movement. One must analyze every scholar, body and soul ; be able to cure all childish aches ; call at every home ; and acquire the art of doing three things at once.

Such, Mr. Baker said, was the standard of competence to the post, and the effort to come up to it, for a while, lent excitement to Peace's life. But presently her failures and difficulties became part of a recognized routine, and excitement gave place to nausea.

The young women who taught with Peace were all poor. Some few loved their work, the others were goaded to it by necessity. Most of them were earnest and faithful. But it was a long time before she could get any inkling of the meaning of life to them. And when she did, she was dismayed to note how little it accorded with her ideas.

These women had no expectations of trips and pleasure-making ; they knew as little of their accompanying emotions as a blind man does of scarlet. They had learned that under no circumstances could they say—"This manner of life will give me delight, so I will adopt it."

They had no conception of how nearly allied it is to a Christian duty to pay formal calls. They thought, when they replenished their wardrobes, "How can I make this wear a little longer?" not "What will gratify my love of beauty?"

They had had their time of longing for release from methodical work, so as to be able to say, not "What is the imperative duty?" but, "This day shall bring forth its meed of accidental pleasures." But they how long since get over that. Now they said, "When I can get time I'll do this and that bit of

sewing, writing, or study." Often, the opportunity never came.

They resented being told that they looked delicate. It suggested, not coddling and novels, but impending want.

They often said that all women ought to work for their living, from a high moral point of view. But, of a disagreeable acquaintance, they wished that she might "be obliged to teach awhile, like us."

Most of them objected to fancy. They regarded it as nearly as reprehensible as lying. It was the bane of their existence. There didn't seem to be much hope about their labor. They laughed bitterly when Peace suggested it, and said conscientiousness was better; she'd get past romantic notions before long. And, true enough, as our heroine walked farther into this twilight region, she saw her careless past like the sunshine at the far end of a tunnel. But she wondered less at this, because she perceived no use in hope when there was nothing worth hoping for. Promotion was like money made in Wall street—gain at some one else's loss; marriages were desirable, but must be cultivated in moments of leisure. Doing good to the scholars was also a desirable thing, and doubtless a certain amount of success a necessity. Indeed, as Peace often told herself, the cause was worthy a life's devotion. But not one of her colleagues had registered a solemn vow to offer it.

The trouble was that the professional prospect opened no vistas. It was uncommonly like a view of a prairie, scholars' heads grew like grass far as the eye could reach. A sublime out-look at first sight; but travelers say that after a while a prairie grows monotonous. The longing to impart, the *art* of imparting, *was not in Peace*, nor many of the remaining sixteen

women at the Sixth District School. Miss Pelican, at least, saw no future full of possible discoveries in theory and practice, to lure her on. She felt that Pestalozzi belonged in a perpetual Inferno, surrounded by cherubs of seven years, for his pains ; and, in certain moments, hoped to see him there. At her best, she was only a faithful mechanic, and a little unsteadiness of rein and inequality of nerve put her at a frightful disadvantage.

Now, labor may, and often does, make women happier. It fills voids left by affection, that has been thwarted or cut off, or must be crowded out. It gives them consciousness of power ; the sovereign power of earning their bread, let what will come ; and this consciousness gives tranquillity, the crowning charm of womanhood. It calls out all their forces and wits, and keeps them in play, so that after her first term's teaching, a girl often finds herself a newly-vitalized creature, with double powers of thinking and action. Teaching brings its votaries into the foci of just as many groups of forces as the school represents families. If one love psychology and metaphysics, this is the chance. If one be a philanthropist, a district school is as good as being a worm in a rose-bud ; one can gnaw a life-time without exhausting the possibilities of supply.

Moreover, the teacher is in perpetual contact with a class of people who have the most intense consciousness of the worth and reality of every moment. To be sure, this increased sense of the value of minutes gives a revulsion against spending them in drudgery. The fact is, the fabric of life is gray drudgery, over-shot here and there with gold thread.

But Peace was soon amazed to find herself not intent on ambition or the future, or the value of life.

All she thought about was how to gather strength for the tasks that lay day by day before her. Life was colorless.

One afternoon she took the family carriage, and set out to call on her old friends. To her astonishment, she found she dissented from every idea they expressed, not because they thought erroneously, but because her point of view had unconsciously changed. She didn't see the absolute necessity to Sophie's well-being of a winter in Europe ; she suspected that Mrs. Higginson would get well of chronic delicacy, if her husband should lose his fortune. She resented everyone's strictures on Emma Jerome's resolve to study medicine, and couldn't see why it was a duty to keep her position in society, and sacrifice her instincts ; she yawned after a half-hour's oration, upon the merits of the Dolman shape ; she became angry when poor Mrs. Gizzard said there must have been a screw loose in Dorothea Casaubon's character, or she wouldn't have acted so absurdly ; and couldn't be made to agree that Mrs. Lewes was "abnormal." In short, she was out of key with all her past acquaintance ; she breathed a sigh of relief to meet her faithful, pinched, overworked fellows. There was a homely steadfastness in their faces, born of honest labor, and Peace saw that it was good, in spite of its attendant trials.

One of the very worst of these proved to be the principal, Mr. Baker. He was a tall, stout man, with a yellow face, and when he smiled, two oily creases in his cheeks followed the outline of his jaws, and very heavy, wicked-looking jaws they were ; his black hair was short behind and long in front, and he had a habit of dipping his hands in the water-jug, and wetting a certain scalp lock, and then curling it round .

and round on top of his head, like the picture of a rattlesnake ready to spring.

When he was about to punish a boy, he always shook him fiercely first, while he exclaimed, "Who is your father?" and woe betide the luckless child whose parents had never paid an income tax.

He had a hateful way of pulling his first class of young ladies by the ear, and feeling of their neck ribbons; and sometimes tendered a kiss of forgiveness to the naughty. Desiring to have his salary raised, he proposed to the school-board that twenty-five per cent. of the wages of his female teachers should be transferred to his own account from their scanty earnings.

The amount of interest this model man felt in Miss Pelican's pupils was truly surprising. He was at her elbow every half-hour. "It did his soul good," he said, "to witness the heroism of a member of the aristocracy, who was not too proud to undertake the elevation of the masses;" as he daily thus improved his spiritual part he never failed to bring his face nearer her own, and he fixed his protruding eyes on her, with a glance like that given by a fish some time hooked out of water. It was added disgust to Peace to find that her companions laughed about it.

But, besides the experiences of her school-life, Miss Pelican had sundry grievances exclusively personal.

Francis Haythorne had blamelessly toiled through his year's practice in Millville; but about Christmas-time he returned to Top Town, and opened an office near Grammercy Place; till his private practice should be established, he offered his services to the Dispensary and Hospital, and filled up his time with all the hard work that presented itself.

He had kept aloof from Peace, since her memora-

ble repulse by Amos's sick bed ; but he seemed willing to change his plan of proceedings with his residence, for he lost no time in visiting Mr. Abimelech Pelican at his office, with the expectation of being invited to call on Peace. He met Mr. Growing, the pastor of the Congregational Church in Cannadasset, at the door, and they entered together.

The old gentleman put down his paper as he saw them, gazed at them abstractedly over his glasses an instant, without speaking, and then seized his hat and rushed from the room.

The young doctor, who added to his natural sensitiveness much painful embarrassment at his relations with the Pelican family, flushed deeply at the marked slight, waited a few minutes, looked at his watch, stammered something about the urgency of business, waited a little longer, felt his position intolerable, and quitted the place, convinced that his intended father-in-law had fled to avoid him, and the necessity of recognizing him.

After an hour or so the absentee returned, and hurried to apologize to Fred Growing for his impoliteness. "I just remembered about ordering the dinner, when you came," exclaimed he, innocently. "I thought you could wait better than a roast of beef. Sorry to have been rude to your friend ; I knew you wouldn't mind."

"Friend," repeated Mr. Growing, astonished. "I hardly know the young man. He came to see you."

Mr. Pelican looked puzzled a moment, and pushed his glasses thoughtfully upon his forehead. After a short consideration, a light broke on him. "Why, now, I think of it," quoth he, "it must have been that beau of Peace's."

Ignorant of the transaction, the young lady waited

in palpitating hope for the expected call, which, of course, never was made. Every evening for a whole fortnight she arrayed herself, and sat momentarily expecting her friend's arrival. After that she turned the face of his photograph to the wall, in stern indignation, and began to torment herself with the fear that she had lost him. As she henceforth saw nothing of him beyond a distant bow at meeting, the dread looked but too well-founded.

Also, since her brother Charley's departure for the West, she had been endeavoring to correspond with him; but this, too, proved a source of bitterness. The pair had parted lovingly enough, and the first half-dozen letters were models of fraternal affection. But one unhappy morning the wretched girl confided to Charley her forlorn condition. The opportunity was not to be missed. He instantly obtained a photograph of her future from the nearest fortune-teller, and inclosed it to her, with an exhortation to keep up her courage.

An angry letter was, of course, elicited, wherein Peace announced that her mother's opinion of Mr. Charles Pelican was correct—"He was a degenerate plant of a strange vine."

After this every day brought her photographs of every style and age of male perfections—sometimes two or three at once.

Her wrathful remonstrances only fanned the flame. It seemed as if her brother read the papers only to extract advertisements for wives and squibs about matrimony. He kept them by him, and pasted them in strips, sending her a yard or two at once. Another time he mailed her half a dozen locks of hair, neatly labeled with the age and occupation of the grower, "as samples of the article." Finally, he started a cor-

respondence in her behalf with an East Indian missionary, now in search of Mrs. Seventh Missionary, the other six having succumbed to the fatalities of climate, hard fare, and toil "in the cause."

Suddenly, these civilities were exchanged for dead silence. The sister, who expected the worst of Charley, from habit, was alarmed, and vainly tried to conciliate. About the time of her departure from Cragenfels, her anxiety became intolerable. She had no idea why the scapegrace failed to write. "But, of course," she said to herself, "he is in mischief. Why did we listen to Mollie's advice and let him go out of our sight." She had her worry for her pains, however, for not a word during six whole months did he write.

In the midst of these days of toil, fret and disappointment, the poor child often thought of her gay winter in Millville—just one year ago ; it seemed like a dream. She wondered if she could have been the saucy beauty, whose teasing, merry tricks had kept the country-house astir with fun. The letters that came from those light-hearted companions seemed like voices from another sphere. Sam Slaughton, the widower, and his Sabrina, Chandy and Bertha, were like the actors of a well-given play, the curtain falls, and their world, which for a brief season, has been your world as well, disappears. You fold your cloak about you and descend into the muddy, windy streets of reality. All this I, Christabel Goldsmith, had eyes to discover, as Otho and I read the witty epistles from Miss Pelican that duly answered our own, for we, too, were actors in those festal mummeries.

But most of all did Peace derive gloomy satisfaction from her correspondence with Sam Slaughton, Sabrina's rejected lover. She told herself it was a con-

solation to see a man who bore pain worse than herself.

“In youth,” we exclaim, “ardor and enthusiasm are lamps quickly lighted and soon burned out.” But it would be a truer metaphor to say that the springs of action run clamorously from their source to the wide sea of experience. There they lie, inactive for very weariness, challenged, indeed, by every passing wind, but only rising to break in quiet murmur upon the sandy strand of habit. But when this reluctant sea is forced to action, with what irresistible power does every long-dormant energy dash forth; then, appalled, we learn how the noisy cascading exploits of youth compare with the concentrated might of maturity. But the fact really remains that weariness is to humanity what gravitation is to the sea—the law that holds it at rest. However, it takes experience to teach this, and Peace remembered the foolish virgin, and hastily concluded the oil for her lamp burnt out, whereas the wick only needed trimming. She began to sign her letters to Mollie—“Your old maid,”—and resumed speculation as to the joy of being matron of a private poorhouse.

But one day she received a packet from Miss McCross, which contained an imperative invitation to the Covert, coupled with the following modest request :

“**TO PEACE.**

“ This is for birds the pairing time,
Now swell their scarlet throats with song,
Of nests and young their strain they tune,
More simple music is my rhyme—
Cadence nor trill to me belong,
Nor home of moss for leafy June,—
My only lay, an olden rune.

“ In all the caroling and glee,
 And antic sport of new wed mates,
 We sit in silence, and alone;
 Jocund nor flaunting-winged are we—
 To tempt the choice we fain must wait,
 Artless, we are in virtue one,
 Much love is ours, but lover none.

“ Why should we seek their tardy care,
 Or plume for eyes whose glance might wound ?
 With equal wing we'll cleave the air,
 Together taste our dainty fare;
 Our shade shall be each tendrilled vine,
 Its golden bursting globes, our wine,
 Each flowery bush our arbor fine;—
 Say, wilt thou be my Valentine ?”

Said Miss Pelican, with equal conciseness and vigor,
 “ No, I won't.”

CHAPTER XVI.

HYMEN.

“ Mother, may I go pick a rose ?
 Yes, if you won't tear your clothes,
 To-morrow's your father's wedding-day.”

 E mentioned that Fred Growing officiated at Deacon McCross's obsequies. On his return this kind-hearted minister found all the alcoves and corners of his roomy, cheerful parsonage haunted by a vision of a sad young face. When he looked up at the ample book-cases in his study, its image shone from the glass;

when he presided at the gay repasts of his five children, he spied the girl, standing silent and drooping, at his threshold ; when he sauntered forth to parochial calls and sun inhaling, he remembered a certain walk he had taken to a newly-filled grave, with a slight form by his side, whose suppressed sobs had seemed to him the saddest he had ever tried to soothe. And this poor maiden's future had no ray of light. Not only was her home broken up by the folly and faults of her mother, but her life had been for years hopelessly mixed up with that of a scoundrel ; for, in spite of his sense, Mr. Growing shared the popular opinion of Louis. Yes, from the bottom of his kindly soul, the good man pitied her ! The Reverend Fred was not a person to let tears fall that could be stayed, so he hastened (mindful of Mollie's tastes) to send her *Culture and Anarchy* ; Baring Gould's *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, and Roscoe on the *Spectrum*, as a means of diverting her thoughts, and with them went a cheering note, bidding her read at her leisure, and exchange for any of the other contents of his library. In fact, he would call and bring her another supply.

And so he did, not long after ; but as he happened to forget the perused volumes, it was needful not only to send them home by a mutual friend, but to pen a tiny word of thanks for the same. As she wrote, it occurred to Mollie to notice what she conceived to be an objection to the material nature of thoughts, viz. : "That an idea, in print, is neither increased nor diminished in its power of affecting the brain by the size of the edition in which it is published, or by the number of readers, whence in itself it could not be matter, for it hath not divisibility ; nor could it well be force, since, if writ in an unknown tongue, though

properly affecting the eye, it conveys itself not to the brain ; nor if the idea be a simple one, and altogether new to the thinker, could its action be referred to the stored product of former thought, gained by massing of personal experiences. Whence it seems, that since ideas exist in matter independent of *any* cognizing mind, as in the case of the cuneiform inscriptions, they cannot be a process of combustion. And since arts, ready for discovery, lie in waiting for the brain to grasp them, they cannot be matter ; it appears that, though through the union of spirit and matter the working of the mind is effected, spirit and matter are not the same thing."

This provoked a lengthy reply, for Mr. Growing had a leaning for speculation, and besides, ardently desired to correct her errors, and triumph over the above fallacies.

Mollie, meantime, having pondered more deeply, felt impelled to write further on the subject. Every letter the two interchanged it brought her personality more plainly before the lonely man—for Fred Growing's parsonage, with all its childish noise and gayety, had long missed the mother and wife, who should have given serenity and comfort to its atmosphere.

And Mollie, on her side, wrapped up in forebodings for her lover, and a host of home annoyances, did not stop to scrutinize too closely the source of what proved so keen a pleasure. Accordingly, the correspondence was kept up zealously by both, till circumstances brought its full meaning visibly to their apprehension, or rather, a train of circumstances, at which we hinted some chapters back.

The day of Deacon McCross's funeral, his widow approached Mr. Pelican with a mien of artistic *difflidence*, and held out a piece of paper for his inspection.

“I know you are a critic of poetry,” said she, hanging her head with girlish modesty, “so I have ventured to bring this little effort of my Muse for your opinion.”

“Thank you, ma’am,” answered the old gentleman, hunting for his glasses with one hand, while he eyed the folded sheet as far off as he could hold it, with his head wisely tipped one side. “You honor me too much.” The string which fastened his spectacles was entangled in his vest buttons. To relieve the awkwardness of the search the good man inquired sympathetically, “How is your husband this morning?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” exclaimed the mourner with vigor. Then, bethinking her of her affliction, she affected to weep.

“Bless me,” cried Mr. Pelican, recollecting, “I forgot that he was dead! Let’s have the verses.”

“It’s no consequence,” said Mrs. McCross, politely, and she took down her handkerchief and watched him read the poem with much interest.

“To ——

B lessed Brownie, dearest friend,
R ound thy head my feelings bend;
O ‘er my dreams thy memories creep,
W hen I fain would sink to sleep.
N e’er would I thy chains dissever,
I would lean on thee forever—
E lse what bliss to die in the endeavor.”

“Well,” quoth Mr. Pelican, tapping his glasses on the writing and uncrossing his plump black legs, as he sought for a courteous opinion. “That’s business-like.”

“Oh, dear! no, please, don’t say that.” Mrs. McCross hastened to make the artless denial. “I’m no hand at business. I often told my dear departed,—‘Elixir,

I said, 'I'm too young to be harnessed up to business; since you have married me so young, it's your duty to leave me my girlish feelings.' So I did, Mr. Pelican, I did keep 'em."

"But," persisted the old gentleman, judicially, "why have you put all the first letters of the lines in a row by themselves?"

"Oh, *Mr. Pelican!*" the blushing widow exclaimed, in confusion. "Don't you see it's an acrostic, on his little pet name? You naughty man, to agitate me thus!"

In the light of this explanation the critic reread the effusion. "Quite a puzzle," was his verdict. "Now you mention it. I see it at once. But—I doubt if Mr. Brown will. I hear that he never had much turn for mathematics."

A pause ensued, during which the glasses were readjusted on the reader's nose, and the authoress bit the hem of her black-bordered kerchief.

"You really don't think he would see it?" said Mrs. McCross, breaking the silence, in distress. "Why, it's the sweetest part."

"You might write 'This is an acrostic' under it. Then, it would be a sure thing," suggested Mr. Pelican, with a view to helpfulness.

This seemed a good solution of the difficulty to the fair Miranda, who accordingly made the addition, and sent her *billet-doux* through the post-office.

Mr. Brown laughed over the touching lines a long time. He had still a few eligible names on his list of matrimonial possibilities, so he felt willing to share the joke with Squire Hitchcock and a few other cronies—who made the most of it, it is needless to tell.

This did not hinder his hastening to Fir Covert to *tender his thanks* for the delicate attention—an oo-

casion seized by the widow to sing “Ever of Thee,” with some shake of voice, but none of purpose.

None of the remaining offers aforesaid would seem to have been accepted, for Cymbalinus, instead of relaxing his attendance at the Covert, grew more assiduous. Mollie acquiesced in silence. Since the reading of her father’s will she had had little besides frowns from her mother—Miranda conceiving the Deacon’s acknowledgments all the result of her daughter’s interference.

So it came about that, not four months after Mr. McCross’s death, his widow’s engagement was publicly announced, and a few weeks later, the wedding took place. For some time previous to the event, Cymbalinus had been vibrating between Top Town and Fir Covert, ordering furniture, and conducting repairs and alterations. His little cane continually pointed to flaws of former taste, and his neat, black eye-glasses were in a state of incessant up-lift to ferret out points of possible improvement. His bride, in a dragging cashmere wrapper, hung on his arm, and admired and coincided, and paid the bills. During his brief absences, she corresponded with him at length, always calling Mollie to hear the letters, which began in this style :

“Alas, the day is very dreary without you, my dear Brownie, my precious husband elect! How I long to lay my head upon your breast, and be at peace.”

Mr. Brown’s treatment of Mollie was worthy of his great nature. He was fond of asking her opinion about the changes (opinion which she never formed as matter of personal interest, or offered unsolicited), and then saying, with a foreign shrug of his little

padded shoulders, "Miranda and I have decided otherwise."

Mollie politely ignored his existence ; but he felt her silent presence, a very Jew in the King's Gate. If he asserted a belief, she never contradicted ; if he asked her a question, she answered simply and briefly ; if he demanded her labor, as he frequently did, it was cheerfully given. "Mollie can do this while we are gone," still held first place in her mother's every-day phrase book ; and Mr. Brown did not disdain to find fault with the finished task.

The deacon's study was ceiled with foreign woods, the parlors were frescoed with black and scarlet, and Mollie's dear room—filled with the memories of her lifetime—the accumulated mementoes, and precious familiar associations of nooks and corners—ruthlessly taken for a lilac boudoir. Mrs. McCross and Cabby came and planned it out, one day, while Mollie sat there stitching on wedding petticoats.

"That book-case is in the wrong place," said Mr. Brown. "The shelves are in tolerably good taste ; I saw shelves in several royal palaces, while I traveled in Europe. We might leave these as they are. Eh ? Miranda ? The fernery and aquarium will go down cellar. They're quite *passé* in fashionable houses. The butterflies on the wall are rather pretty ; I don't know—if they don't attract moths—but they might remain. We'll get new furniture, and alter the effect entirely. The room does very well as a bed-chamber, but for a boudoir, it's not at all the thing. The mats and tidies are neat ; we may want them, if we don't conclude to buy lace." He gave a parting survey through his eye-glasses, held elegantly with the little finger and third, well spread ; and Mrs. McCross, for a *wonder*, staid to say that she was sorry to make the

change, her daughter should have her choice of the vacant apartments.

“ Which ? ” said Mollie, smiling—she was past being vexed by such impertinences as those just enacted. “ You forget that Mr. Brown must have a billiard-room, and yourself a boudoir, and Mr. Brown a gentleman’s guest chamber, and yourself a sewing-room, and then, with your own and the two state bed-chambers, and the man and maid servants, there is nothing left but the little hall bed-room, which I will take.”

“ *Ma foi !* not that ! ” said Mr. Brown, turning around, full of pretty French impulse. “ I have arranged to use it as my closet.”

“ I was thinking that the coachman might have his old quarters in the barn, and Mary move into his room,” said Mrs. McCross, hesitating and looking at Cabby. Then, with a relieved expression as he assented—“ She won’t mind it’s being over the kitchen—it will gratify her passion for Irish society.”

Mollie rose and folded her work. “ If that is the arrangement, I will change to-day. I heard you tell the workmen they would begin here to-morrow.”

No objection was made, though her mother lingered a little, as if she had something on her mind. The daughter’s heart beat fast. “ She is sorry—she cannot help it,” was her swift thought, and she gave a yearning, heart-full look at her face.

“ I was thinking, Mary, that while you are about it, it would save time to pack the furniture in the blue room, too ; Bridget don’t like such heavy lifting.”

Mollie left neither mats, nor butterflies, nor books. She locked them all in three trunks, and put the keys in her chatelaine—and the resolve was packed in with

them, to go away and earn her own bread. She was only fit, she thought, for one position, nor cared to take other—she would find an Overseer's or Chaplain's place in a prison. But she resolved not to broach the question till after the wedding, lest, perhaps, it might, a little, only a little, cloud her mother's pleasure.

It is absurd to say we can have no love except it be founded on respect. True—love only gives happiness when so based, but the purest, because least selfish, form of love is that whose groundwork is pity, and whose superstructure of relation and act is continual self-abnegation.

Mollie so loved Mrs. McCross. She was essentially loyal in her own nature, and, moreover, had respect to the tie that bound her to her mother—her father's wife—her companion through the common household joys and sorrows. But, besides, she loved her as a person. Not only coldly wished her no ill, but warmly desired her to be happy.

She, therefore, smothered her disgust when her mother dragged her to prayer-meeting (the daughter going behind, while the engaged pranced on in front), and Mrs. McCross sang, "He is fitting up my mansion, where my stay shall not be transient," and Miss Pettingil sniffed scornfully.

At first it was a bitter thing to see her father's memory so trampled upon. "But, after all," she said, "it results from my mother's natural inability for other action," and let it go at that. She never supposed Mrs. McCross loved Cabby as she did her lover, but she believed his presence caused a selfish, but pleasant, tickling of heart, and, if that satisfied, Mollie didn't grudge it.

There was a struggle when, on six hundred invitations being sent out, the affianced kissed her on the

cheek, and said, "My dear, you and Peace will be my bridesmaids, and wear pink and blue, and invite Mr. Haythorne and Mr. Growing for groomsmen. Brownie and I couldn't part last night till eleven o'clock, discussing the effect."

"Why, mother, they all hate him," objected Mollie, aghast; "and I am mourning papa, scarcely four months buried; and Mr. Growing is a widower. I can't! None of them will consent."

"They'll all do anything for you, and there's no one else to ask. The wedding'll be an out and out failure! But it's plain you don't care. You're glad of it. You want it to flat out, and me to be ridiculous! And you my own daughter! It's all I can expect, now poor Elizur is dead. He always used to take my part! So selfish to refuse to wear a handsome dress, and stand five minutes in the parlor, to please me."

Her daughter went up stairs silently, locked herself in her own room, and sank down beside the chest that held her few dearest treasures, those which must be looked at sometimes, to still the heartache. "I can't, I won't!" she gasped, clutching the trunk with a convulsive force, that told the strength of her passion. "I have suffered to the end! Contemptible puppy! Shall I forget decency, common respect to my father, for his gratification. I will not! I'll die first. Oh, father! father!"

But the image of the gentle, much enduring old man was out of keeping with this torrent of anger—a white intensity of passion, that gave a clue to what must have happened many another time behind her locked doors, ere she earned and maintained her quiet composure in the world's sight. The violence of such self-contained natures when passion outs and masters is as frightful as their every-day calmness is com-

plete. Mollie sobbed herself exhausted ; when she rose to get the keys, hanging across the room, her tottering limbs would hardly support her.

She opened her trunk, and drew her father's picture from its hiding. Mollie—cold, emotionless ! There was fire enough in the kisses she pressed upon the bald-headed, blear-eyed image, to warm the dead clay beneath the snow. In the very midst of them, she remembered the old man's favorite saying, "Peace—peace—anything for peace." The still certainty that he could not be loved by contention entered her soul. What mattered public opinion to him ? Why should she regard herself ? It would be better, far better to suffer in his spirit this once more.

So she descended, with her accustomed quietude, to dry the tears of weeping Miranda, doleful at her daughter's harsh refusal to make her happy, and complaining that, except dear Brownie, no one cared for her, she was alone in the world—a lament that had still power to wring her daughter's heart, soft with its own grief, when she remembered the sad truth of the words so flippantly uttered. For Mrs. McCross, who didn't believe, though she so often asserted it, had, as Mollie knew, no friends.

But the air of mild reproach with which submission was received soon merged into delight, as she berated hod-carrier and mason for poor labor, criticised the cleaning done in sullenness by Bridget, and agitated over the fit of wedding-garments prepared by Scratchhard—Miss Pettingil being at feud with Miranda.

The six hundred invitations covered three classes in Mrs. McCross's mind. Those who wanted to get married and couldn't, like Peace ; those who had

married, to whom Miranda would show that she could also ; those who had supposed she couldn't, and were now to see to the contrary, with shame and confusion of face.

Millville, Roaring River and Top Town divided the honor, and Mrs. McCross's plan in the matter of bridesmaids had been successful.

"Would you kiss him?" said she to Peace, when they strolled into the parlor after supper to admire the decorations, on the eventful night. "I hear it isn't fashionable. What do you think, Mollie?"

"I'd please myself, it seems to me," said Mary, in a tone perhaps a little cold.

A spasm of pain crossed her mother's gentle face, and she wiped a tear directly.

There was a bell of white rosebuds hung over the door, and an arch of green and callas, and a marriage bower of smilax and a chime of bells ; all Mr. Brown's taste. As he observed complacently, he'd made a study of Hymeneal decorations, and believed no one understood the "effect of *tout ensemble*," better than he.

"Oh, there's some one at the door," with a start ; "perhaps it's the gentlemen, or Captain and Mrs. Slocum. Your trunk hasn't come. Don't you want to go up stairs, Peace, and wait? Only Mr. Haythorne? Oh, well! If you don't mind, I don't know why I should. Very likely he's seen you look worse. When people are slack housekeepers, they're apt to show dowdy at home."

Peace glanced at her plain gray traveling-suit with a furious blush. She had earned it in laborious school-teaching, and as we know, economy grated a little, as it always does on handsome women.

"It is time for us both to begin dressing," said Mollie, moving away, for she spied Fred Growing at

the piazza steps, and hated to meet him. She was at war with herself and every one to-night. Why should her old friend manifest such interest in this wretched play at *Vanity Fair*? How could he, her father's trusted confidant, consent to take part in the farce? There was an answer, but she never meant to be obliged to face it.

It was the fourteenth of February, and, as the two girls arrayed themselves for the evening, they both recalled the past anniversaries of the lover's saint.

Peace remembered the beautiful Valentine party at Cragenfels, and thought, with curious antagonism between feeling and memory, of Francis Haythorne's rhymes, sent with such jesting coolness a year before. She once more repeated them to herself, facing her mirror, comparing the old and present sensations bitterly :

“ My lips I'll softly lay against Peace's heavenly cheek,
Dyed like the dawning day, or polished ivory sleek;
And in her ear I'll say, ‘ O thou bright morning star,
‘Tis I have come so far, my Valentine to seek.’ ”

“ I hate him,” said she, drawing herself up proudly, but paused to listen while self said to self, “ He is worthy of your love. He has proved his right to your respect. He is all that you taunted him as lacking. Who more self-denying in an arduous profession—more kind to the suffering—more coldly polite to you? ” “ It's all true,” she exclaimed aloud. “ You, faithless as quicksand, grow more admirable, more handsome every day, and *I—I* fade out teaching unwashed ragamuffins at district school. You dared to say you'd be my bride's man with pleasure. You love to torment.” Tears burned in her black eyes, and she set her heel vindictively on a rose-bud her drapery

had swept to the floor. "There, I hate you!" cried she again. "I said it, and it's so, and I'll make you feel it."

The girls went down into the bride's-maids' room together, Peace's cheeks hot and red as blood; Mollie white as the orange-flowers in her hair. What could have been *her* feeling while she arrayed herself to take part in a ceremony that stirs every woman's heart with tender excitement—a ceremony, too, that would have been her own, but for the guilty pair who claimed it. She had outlived her girlish dreams—the roses so soft and perfumed—the green-decked parlor—the bride's cake, and loving congratulations of friends—all the thousand emblems that the great type of God love has pressed into its service, emblems of the Dear Good that she had hoped would crown her life, were still significant, but only of lack. She laid down the spray of orange-flowers, raised to crown her braided hair, and buried her face in her hands. No! the festivity sounding below, the noise of the band tuning and playing, the laughter, the warm, perfumed air—floating up and enveloping her in their dizzy rush of remembered longing—were all for her. The voice heard indistinctly on the stairs was Louis'—hers through all—and they would go down presently together, and make the promises—promises whose fulfillment was all the joy they craved. And he would look as of old—her hand should lie in his—his breath fan her cheek. "God bless poor Louis, far away," she murmured. And Louis, sitting in despair that night, was comforted and saved by her love—saved in the simple ways in which the God of constancy loves to work.

But vision of her mother tricked out in youthful finery shattered Mollie's dream. She forced the tears

back from her eyes—fastened the orange-flowers in her hair—her pretty brown hair, in which she had seen that evening more than one thread of white. She had learned to find her natural place in scenes of want and pain, but amid wedding joys—alas ! alas !

But Mollie had her Valentine to con as well as Peace—a faded missive with a cut paper screen, and silk tassel that, properly pulled, disclosed two lovers in each other's embrace. She held it lovingly now, and turned the page to kiss the childish rhyme, ere she descended:

“Do you love me ? I love thee—
Then, forever true we'll be.—*L. Allwood.*”

“Thou shalt have a wedding, darling,” she whispered, and sighed and brushed another tear from the already blotted lines. Then she hid the poor treasure in her bosom, and joined Peace on the stairs.

The bridesmaids' dresses were, except in color, exactly alike—blue and pink satin, respectively, trimmed with flounces of lace, each headed with a wreath of clematis. Cymbalinus had ordered them himself, in every detail, and his wife, a day or two after the wedding, sent Peace the bill for hers, which sadly diminished the teacher's income—but that being an after-taste, was not yet come to digestion.

Francis Haythorne spied his friends as they entered, and crossed the room instantly.

“How beautiful you are to-night, Peace,” said he, offering each an arm—with an expression in the glance given the brunette certainly not indifference.

“Only outside admiration for my face, not me,” thought she, and answered flippantly, “Oh ! you are making a dictionary of compliments, I hear. That comes under B, perhaps.”

He seemed hurt, but said nothing ; and Mollie, looking intently from one to the other, loosened her clasp of his arm, and fell behind unnoticed. This left her to *her* bride's man, who came directly and brought her to a seat, where he talked to her with the charming union of impulse and earnestness that made him—Fred Growing. He was full of anecdotes of his little children ; how they carved boats on Sunday, and put a “missionary on board” to sanctify the amusement ; how they inquired who made man, and, if God, who made God, going back to the roots of things, as children do ; and how the youngest would be fed with something he called “he moss merino,” instead of sea-moss farina, and so on, through all the sweet mistakes, and deep things of a loving children's home—the very sort of home Mollie had fondly pictured as her own.

Otto and I were there that night. I am Mollie's first cousin, you know, on the mother's side. But in my feminine interest in the gossip I heard afterward, I have almost forgotten to put down the style in which the service itself went off ; the storm and defiance of Peace ; the icy coldness of Mary ; how tremulously fell the bride's “I will ;” how Cabby couldn't forbear glancing at his boots, which were tight, when the momentous promise, “with all my worldly goods I thee endow,” was required. Neither could he restrain an exultant glance at the bride's-maids, when he received their congratulations. Rich at last ! and they, poor things, had both refused him !

“Would you call this house sweet and varnished, or swept and garnished, Miss Mollie ?” said Captain Slocum, carrying her off, as soon as the tide of good wishes had sufficiently ebbed.

Dulcet, who was regnant in black satin and diamonds, and a trifle flushed from the recent pleasure of

being saluted by Miranda as "Aunt Slocum," beckoned them over to her seat.

"What's the matter, wifie?" said the bluff captain, surveying her with some anxiety. "I vum, you look wrathy."

"Not at all," returned Dulcet. "I only feel the effects of caloric emanating from Hymen's torch. Nephew Brown has made a good match, and I know you don't grudge him his fortune, Mollie."

"No," said her husband, with a side grimace; "she don't, and I don't either. Dulcet, love, I'm going to leave you to explain your little plan to Mollie—about the seven, you know."

"It's this. Cymbalinus happened to say to-day that you did not mean to remain at the Covert, and I wanted to ask you if you had settled where to go. If you have no other plans, will you not make your home with us? The six are a very engrossing care, and now number seven has come you would be a great help. I should love to have you, Mollie." Mrs. Slocum laid her diamond-circled hand in the young girl's affectionately, as she spoke. "You have always seemed near to me since the time when I was a poor school-ma'am, and you brought me flowers."

"In short," added the captain, who had remained to admire his good Dulcet's little air of complacent patronage, "Nephew Brown is well off our hands, and we're very willing to take niece Mary in exchange. 'Even trade's no robbery,' you understand."

Mollie looked from one to the other with an expression of astonishment, swiftly merging into hurt feeling, shame and gratitude. She had not said a word of her secret intentions.

"Yes, I shall leave here soon," she answered quietly, "but not to stay in Millville. I have no separate in-

come, you know. I must go away and earn my bread. I thank you kindly for your offer, but my plans are nearly mature, and I will not quit the home my father earned till I part from the neighborhood, all at once."

There was a little emphasis on Mollie's verb tenses and the mention of Deacon McCross, that very nearly amounted to saying "Nephew Brown can object if he dares!" and Dulcet's look of surprise induced Mollie to suspect that he had gone farther than happen to say.

"I'm glad you've got the grit," said the captain, frankly; "but we were in earnest, and are yet, if you ever need our offer."

Meanwhile Mollie couldn't help overhearing a conversation going on behind her.

"Not a bit, Judge Sistaire. I didn't. He's a lawyer, too. Wendell Phillips says all lawyers are in the gall of bitterness and the strong bonds of iniquity. You're one. Is it so?"

"I'm afraid it is, Mrs. Hauxhurst," laughed the Judge, who had deservedly attained to the highest honor in the gift of his State; "but I've risen so slowly in my profession that I've thus far failed to disgrace my family."

"You've got a new horse."

"Yes; I love horses."

"Don't you wish yours could talk?"

"No, I'm afraid he'd always be calling me names for making him go fast."

"Well, tell me one thing. Do you like to drive?"

"Yes, with my wife. Did you intend inviting me?"

"No, stupid. Not while I can have Johnnie; but the bride of the evening don't. She says Brownie is so preoccupied with her when they are out together

that he neglects his horse, and she expects a runaway."

"It's true there's no fool like an old one," said Mrs. Lankman, moving into the space just vacated, and having Mrs. Peter Bradshaw in tow. "Look at her bony neck and freshly-dyed head, exactly the same color as Cabby's mustache. Perhaps they saved the price of one bottle between them."

"Very likely. What did you think of Dr. Perfect's attack on your husband last Sunday?"

"It was fiendish!" retorted the pin-cushion, indignantly, no longer sea-green as of yore, but cobalt-blue, new for the occasion. "I don't understand how any one would listen to it. I've been married to Mr. Lankman ten years, but I never had the mortification of hearing him compared to a low-born mechanic before. It's too outrageous!"

"Why, Peace, how can you go about so with Francis Haythorne, if you don't mean to marry him?" cried Zoe Bradshaw, breaking hurriedly away from the Pole's wife to join her old friend. "How perfectly magnificent you look to-night—never so lovely before! But you shouldn't now, really." Mrs. Bradshaw's married life sat easily on her. She was still her husband's ideal little pomegranate.

"I never shall marry him, Zoe. 'Jacky wouldn't 'cause he couldn't,'" and Peace laughed merrily. "The fact is I felt bound to have him read the prayers in church at Top Town, and he was too lazy to find the places, and so I had to let him look over in the same book with me. Now, Zoe,"—this in a confidential whisper—"it spoilt my market. But I don't regret it—it was in a good cause. I must have attention, though, and he'll do as well as any to pass time with. *Have you seen the Perfects' wedding gift?*"

"No ; why, they're fighting like Cherokees."

"That don't make any difference. There's a three-dollar lace handkerchief, with their card, wrapped in two tracts—one about lying—on the table with the other things. Ah ! here comes my partner. Good evening again, Peter Quince."

"Don't you think you'd better go to supper," said Mollie, reaching around the secretary that had concealed her. "I don't need to commend you to Aunt Mustard-seed."

"A ghost !" laughed Miss Pelican. "Scrooge's ghost ! If I'm a bit of mustard, you must be the underdone potato he mentions."

"'The tocsin of the soul,' in the words of Mrs. Commonplace, has sounded. Won't you come, too, Miss Mollie. Peace ought to appreciate this allusion."

"No, thank you ; I don't want my victuals forked at me on the prongs of a thistle," said Mollie, out of patience with them, for they'd been tormenting themselves for the pleasure of hurting each other all the evening.

Presently they came back. "'A brace of sinners, for no good, were ordered,' &c.," said Peace. "It isn't ready, and you're to sing. Your mother commands it. The company will then attend and go down in due order."

"Yes," said Fred Growing, appearing, "and I am to choose the song—'Three Fishers.' " Mollie's ballads were somewhat noted. They were echoes of experience, and human nature is still cannibal enough to feed willingly off such heart-feasts.

So they all went to the piano, and Mollie sang, and people wept, as the custom is, and Peace surveyed Francis Haythorne with animosity, and swallowed a

lump in her throat. "Do you know what I told you a long time ago?" said she.

"Certainly," he replied, with perfect *sang froid*. "You said you hated me, and, I remember, I said, 'Barkis is willin'."

"I'm glad you haven't forgotten. I wanted to remind you because I haven't changed a bit."

He laughed—two low, clear notes of heart-felt mirth. "Neither have I," said he, and laughed again.

But now supper really was ready, and the rooms were deserted by all but Mollie, who lingered by the piano, thinking about the interchange of civilities just completed.

Every one was at her call to-night. When a young girl longs to please, schools herself to charm, permits her soul to grow into the wish, she rarely commands homage; but let her carry a pang in her heart, which makes common admiration of no value, and the world will be at her feet. There had been a time in Mollie's life when she would have given much for popularity a little while—just as every young maiden feels the same harmless desire, when, school days ending, the world's all before her, and scarce a hair's breadth of separation marks the dawning careers of worldling and devotee. But Mollie could deal with none but naked hearts. She didn't mind the masks we wear when once she had peeped behind them, for then she could make the true man walk forth at pleasure. But society is nothing but a grand masquerade where the one uncovered face is out of keeping, and the doffing of vizors comes only at the death-feast, with too many of us.

Mollie, therefore, had been a social failure. It was said that she had no "small talk." Being, then, outside of the polite world, she taught in Patience of

Hope, and loved Louis. The years of persevering culture,—work,—pain,—found her a shy, eager, sensitive girl, full of rough corners and pugnacious theories—not always agreeable—never at liberty from some absorbing scheme. They left her accomplished and cultured—a self-poised woman, fascinating to less able strugglers in her quiet mastery of herself, her fresh, incessant thought, total freedom from self-consciousness, and refined beauty—a beauty the impress less of nature than habitual soul mood—doubly fascinating to the strong, in their instant recognition of kinship, and her frank admittance of the relation and its comrade privileges; a simple-minded woman withal, and guileless, and a woman who held coquetry to be only refined vulgarity, and vulgarity just one shade a greater crime than murder. "For," said she, "God can forgive murder, but what forgiveness applied to the vulgar soul will eradicate its stains?" A woman of this mold is beyond "society." It worships her, because she is unattainable, and independent of it.

Mollie felt this to-night. Millville had never given such another wedding party. Its choicest and wisest, become *her* fellows, had been proud to acknowledge their kinship. Roaring River and Top Town had thronged the house for her sake, and the compliments and flattery and kindness and honor were elicited by her popularity. She leaned over the piano keys, the very ones Louis had touched so often, and dropped her weary brow upon her arm—unconsciously, in Louis's own attitude—and realized, in mental review, the one coveted desire. It was worthless. Worse than that it was bitter.

Mr. Growing had been with her constantly—defe~~x~~ential, friendly. Society gave him the right this eve~~n~~ing. Even now he entered unperceived and drew

chair toward her piano-stool before she roused from her reverie. If Mollie could have foreseen that such a look would shine for her upon his good, true face as glorified it now, she would never have been bride's-maid, or least of all accepted him for groomsman.

"Why did you refuse to go out to supper?" said he, as she hurriedly raised her head, and put aside her inner-self, as if detected in a fault—she slept in harness. "I have taken mine obediently, and have come back to talk to you five minutes. Mrs. Deacon Williams has already pranced off with the great flower-basket, and had to be despoiled of it forcibly, and the eating and drinking can't be kept up much longer."

"I am a hater of late suppers," said Mollie, "and am moreover so tired that even the ice cream boar's head with the bloody nose is no temptation. You look grieved. What troubles?"

"My poor dog is dead!" broke forth Fred, whose diffusive sympathy embraced animals. "Fuz—you know him—he had a tail like a white feather. He lived from hand to mouth here in Millville, and when he got sick they killed him. But, for all his vagrant existence, he had a good life. Everybody knew him. Every one was kind to him. He had friends."

"Very probably he is rejuvenated in the next world. He has another sphere of experience," said Mollie, speculatively.

"Of course. What would be the use of living if such creatures hadn't?" assented the bereaved master, overflowing with emotion.

"Then I hope he'll be merciful to my cat," said the practical philosopher. "Tabby has been over there seven years now, but she'll surely remember him. Perhaps she's grown. They say we do, you know. *Perhaps she's as big as he is now.*"

"Big as a hyena," suggested Fred. "She'll eat him up." And they both laughed at the ridiculous notion. Then he dropped the bagatelle. "I want to ask if you've heard of Mr. Allwood?" said he, hesitating.

"No," answered Mollie, sorrowfully, "I have not."

"You have waited for him five years. It is months since he left Top Town. Are you—forgive the question—any nearer the fulfillment of your hope than the first day? I know I cause you pain, but let me speak. You are homeless, portionless. He may be dead. He may have fainted in the struggle."

"He may," said Mollie, as if the thought were not new.

"Must your life be wasted to his memory? You must go out of these refinements that are so fitly your setting, and earn your own bread laboriously. Is this a duty? All that human constancy can do, yours has done. I have thought of it long, and put the thought away, but it comes back. You have always been dear to me as Mary McCross. Will you not be dear to me as Mary, my wife? I know that I can make you happy. Can you not rest in my home, my love?"

Mollie had a strong affection for this man. She trusted and esteemed him, knew that she could hold fellowship with him. He believed he had power to give her rest. Oh, how she longed for rest! Why wander forth into the dreary future alone—hopeless—constant to a shadow? All this in one swift moment. And then the reaction. Should she possess this rest, and Louis, who loved her, stand outside, wifeless, without hope or comfort, in the very desolation she feared to encounter herself? Or suppose he could forget her, and take some common, coarse woman (who else would marry the prison bird?), what would

become of their past? We live, truly, in present time, but the past and future are not ours, but eternity's. Could she be false to that or him?

Her answer was decisive. "This never will be, Mr. Growing. I am glad to end the thought to-night. We might have loved each other. It isn't that I doubt your power to do all you offer; but I love Louis, and so you see now I can never turn away from him to another, because *he is*. You have often quoted Caroline Perthe's saying, 'There are only two valuable things, truth and love.' I cannot possess them both except in Louis. My soul is married to him, not in time, but the forever."

She was explaining herself as she read his face, trying to bring consent and belief there. But he would plead once more in a suit so dear.

"If he has fallen—you admit he may have fallen—what then? You will not wed your purity to his shame?"

"I will not deny the possibility of his failure," said Mollie, quietly, "because such a possibility exists. I faced it long ago. I do not believe he has, but, if it is so, I must wait. I know that he will even then rise again. I believe in universal up-growing. I am his!"

"Mollie!" cried he, hoarsely, "how dare you? You have no right to throw away your life to a reprobate, for his silence proves his falsehood."

"You are wrong," she said, drawing herself up haughtily. "I will not hear you say so. He *is* true. I love him." And then, softening, "You tried to be kind to me. I will tell you. Did not Christ die for reprobates?"

"Yes."

"Isn't the church of reprobates His bride? Didn't He live and die for it? Haven't I—am I not bound to

follow His example, and save *my* husband? If I wait for him, I will save him."

"I do not know," he answered. "I speak as a man. God bless you! But you will let me be your friend?"

"No. It would be our common ruin. You tempted me. Good-bye." She rose and went steadily away.

CHAPTER XVII.

"AND HENCE I'LL TO THE GREENWOOD GO,
ALONE, A BANISHED MAN."

'One he comes and two he tarries,
I'll hitch in my hatchet, and up I'll go.'

 AID a Hartford tramp—plump and sleek, after his kind—to a lady: "Will you give something to a poor man out of work?" As he rang the door-bell, he had just tucked his tobacco-pipe in his pocket, and donated half a loaf of bread and a piece of pie to the dog beside the front gate, as too troublesome to carry.

"No," said, she, indignantly, "go on; I don't give to tramps."

"Well," said the man, "no offense. But you might at least be cordial."

When Louis aimlessly descended the stairs next morning, he found that Mrs. Parish was not cordial.

Our landlady had arisen at half past four to mop the front hall oil-cloth with carbolic acid, as a preventive of typhus, busily roaming over the city. She put

twice as much tea as usual in her own private tea-pot, halved the boarders' coffee, pulled the wool of the darkey who washed the dishes, set a big yellow pie-plate full of chloride of lime under the piano in the parlor, and announced her intention to have codfish and onions every day for dinner, and to take up all the carpets in the establishment. Not content with this, she sent Nora to bring the household pillows for the purpose of subtracting enough feathers for another pair. There was a small court behind the house which Mrs. Parish devoted to a flock of poultry. Never was she so softened as when she walked among her cackling broods with her little black shawl over her head, and her meal dish in her hand. On these occasions, whenever she found one of their feathers, she picked it up and stuck its end in her mouth. When she returned to the house well feathered out, her boarders knew the time was propitious ; but woe betide the wight who asked for blankets when she came back plumeless, as to-day.

“Don’t talk,” cried she, acrimoniously, as the boldest of her victims ventured a meek remonstrance. “These pillows lean ! Would you like ‘em stuffed with birds of paradise ? You should think it was corn cobs ? Well, I’ve known *good* men who slept well on a stone. But folks differ. If I don’t know how many feathers go to a pillow nobody does ! Didn’t I pick up all them in yours one and two at a time, as the hens dropped them ? Perhaps you don’t know how much them feathers are worth a pound ! Didn’t I give you ungrateful boarders fried ham and eggs this very morning, when I knew, by long experience, your appetite for dinner ‘d be more by the means ? Where else will you find a boarding-house that puts coffee sugar in its pickles—speak !”

Mrs. Parish's nose, a trifle red from erysipelas, elevated itself visibly, and she gave the knot of her white head-gear a snapping jerk that brought it well under one ear. The speaker, quite extinguished, applied himself humbly to sour toast and coffee, and the irate hostess took a chair in front of the table whence were dispensed comestibles, and knit with vigor.

Her boarders rose sneakingly and slipped out. She had kept them in hand, and well for her that she did. Louis alone, placid in the storm, remained finishing his meal. Seven o'clock had no longer a meaning to him. He would be faithful, for Mollie's sake, but it was without hope. Meanwhile, as well do one thing as another.

"I should like to inquire if Allwood's your true name," said Mrs. Parish, surveying him over her energetic needle play. She combined several inflections on the infinitive, as people in unpleasant mental condition sometimes will.

"Yes, ma'am," said Louis. He had a strong notion of the respect due the head of the house, and used the form habitually.

"I didn't know," retorted Mrs. Parish, in an injured tone. "The men was all talking about you last night. I thought I would lose nothin' by asking. I never believe boarders. They always lie more or less. You come from Millville, William Everett says."

There didn't seem to be any personality intended, and Louis answered, "Yes, ma'am," again, very faintly.

"Then you're intimate with Everett, and John Nickson, and Almiry Petingil?"

"I am acquainted with Miss Petingil," said the catechised, "and I have some knowledge of Knox. He was Knox in Top Town, where I saw him."

"Why don't you let out on him? If you know his name, you know what he's up to!" Mrs. Parish was knitting very fast.

"Because I don't see any use in it."

"I'll tell you what," announced the landlady; "I don't care whether you've been in fifty prisons or not, as long as you pay, and ask no favors, you're welcome to stay, if only to put down them cranky boys. It's against my principles to do anything for boarders. They're a shiftless, rantankerous set, always ready to disparage the butter, and harp on the bread. I wouldn't speak for you, but I'm bound they shan't have their way."

"Thank you," said Louis—prison discipline failing to rule the shame out of his tell-tale face; "then I am to understand that my fellow lodgers have been warning you against me?"

"You may understand all the lies you please. I make it a rule never to argue with boarders," rejoined Mrs. Parish, stiff as a poker. Her shoulders were always jerked back, and her elbows, like her humor, crooked to the worst angle for jabbing into one. She surveyed her victim with her snapping black eyes, and hardened her heart. "Nora," called she, with a twang to her larynx like the bowstring of doom, "where are them eight dozen eggs come from market?"

"If you please, mum," responded Nora, bobbing her head in through the door, and clinging desperately to the handle, "dem eggs is jest gwine on de pantry shelf."

"No such thing," retorted Mrs. Parish. "Do you take me for a ninny? Go and set them in the salt-tub on their little ends, or they'll be as addled as your brains in a week. Don't you let me find 'em lyin' flat,

when I go to look, or I'll tie the shells to your pig-tails."

"Law, Miss!" and Nora disappeared, with a grin. Her mistress, softened by the household episode, relaxed. "If you want advice, don't pay no attention to them anyhow. I never do. Nice life I should lead if I did," she vouchsafed Louis, who was shifting the grounds in his coffee-cup, and trying to read illegible predictions in their shapes.

"I shan't," said he, wearily. "It won't make any difference. All the same a thousand years hence."

"Don't talk so. It don't sound pretty."

"It won't," persisted Louis, asserting it as a fact devoid of all interest to himself, except for sake of argument. "After I've eaten up the money you have ahead, I shall starve, so what's the odds?"

Mrs. Parish smiled grimly. "You need change of air," said she. "Where's the man in you? What if you *have* been contemptible and suffered for it. Live it down."

"I haven't!" said Louis, springing up, as if hit by her elbow instead of her tongue. "I may not always have done my best, but I never did a contemptible thing in my life. I expect to starve, but not because I'm mean. I'm not; I'm a gentleman."

"It all comes to the same thing," was the laconic rejoinder.

"No, it don't," cried the young fellow, getting angrier every second. "It don't come to the same thing at all. It's just the difference between a responsible person and a scoundrel. I'm not a scoundrel."

Mrs. Parish smiled again. She loved to brow-beat her boarders, and hung to a point, like a bull-dog, for sheer enjoyment of aggravation. "It's all the same to

me, not the slightest difference, so long as you pay me."

Louis walked up and down, exasperated to the last degree, and Mrs. Parish knit on, her blue lips curled in a grim pleasure at her power; but she was astonished when the Badgered came and stood before her, hands behind him, like a boy in presence of his school-mistress, to say, with vehement earnestness:

"Do you mean it?"

She glanced enjoyingly over his graceful boyish figure, and his face, with cheeks lit with bright, fleeting color. He was a charming picture to her boarder-haunted imagination. She rolled up her yarn ball, preparatory to action, but wouldn't give in. "Why shouldn't I?" said she.

"Then I'm going away. A week's life won't make any difference. I'll try to find a place where nobody knows and distrusts me. Good-bye." He meant it, and was half across the room on his way out, before she arranged her ideas.

"You must be silly," said she, giving her needles a vindictive prick through her work. "I can't spare the parrot, so I suppose I may's well own beat, a thing I never did before to a boarder. I happen to know you're all right, for I had it out with Knox about you last night, and he left in a huff. If I was you, I'd travel a little."

"Travel!" repeated Louis, blankly.

"Yes, travel," retorted Mrs. Parish, sharp as ever. "Get an agency for a clothes-horse, or a wringer, or a saw, or a spiral lightning-rod—unless you feel above it, when you don't want any of my advice."

"Not at all," said Louis hastily. "Not in the least."

"If you need a little money to deposit on the first

stock, I'll lend it to you," pursued Mrs. Parish. " You won't any more than earn your expenses. Your tongue ain't half an inch long, but you'll see life, and master yourself. Meantime I'll keep the parrot, and if I hear of anything you're fit for—which there ain't much—I'll let you know."

Louis was astonished. There was more generosity in Wilhelmina Parish, malgré pipe, onions, and habits with boarders, than in all high-toned Top-Town and bustling Millville combined. She was like Mollie! The landlady was startled to see two great tears gather in her lodger's eyes and roll to the floor.

"Mercy sakes!" screamed she, recoiling. " You'll spot the paint! I don't want a passel of women boarders around me! Leave tears to your poor sweetheart in Millville, an' do suthin'." From which it may be suspected that the landlady had put two and two together—and then there was Polly.

That very night Louis went off with a clothes-wringer of whose merits he was more eloquent than its purchasers. What a pity Peace couldn't have accompanied him in his round, and taken part number two in the little dialogue, "I called to see if you wouldn't like to look," &c. But Mrs. Parish was right. It did him good. His faculties—rusted in Top Town—sharpened fast in the rough and tumble for a living, and he had no chance to get morbid in the constant variety and adventure of his wanderings.

One day, as he sat gazing at the swiftly dissolving panorama from the car window, the train entered a bridge. Far up the stream as the eye could see, the water had cut itself a somber cañon, so deep that the slant morning sun caught and rounded with yellow only the tops of the tallest firs and pines that lined its throat, and left the rest in gloom. A flock of winter

birds were darting back and forth through the sharp line of shade and sunlight—now were dark specks, circling over the scanty water, slipping chillily among black stones varnished with ice—now sparks of golden light as they mounted higher in their flight. All was lonely, and Louis felt in sympathy with the scene.

Stepping hastily over the open ties of the next track, a young giant urged his pace to reach the neighboring depot, and catch the train. Our hero watched him with idle enjoyment of his beauty and free, powerful motion, just as he had been looking at the birds. The shoulders well thrown back, the curly head, erect and firm, the sealskin coat, thrown open to give the sturdy limbs free play, had all an agreeable sense of familiarity. An eye less steady, a foot less firm, would have dreaded that dangerous road. As he looked, dreamily trying to recall when and where he had seen the like, the man's foot slipped—he reeled, lost his balance, and disappeared.

Louis sprang up in a swift throb of horror, clutched the bell-rope, and ran to the platform. It was the rear car. The train, already slackened for the station, stopped ; in a moment he was threading the same hazardous path, followed by a handful of passengers. He ran fast as he could, but before he reached the spot the handsome head, pale but determined, rose slowly above the rails ; the man, who had caught by his hands, now pulled himself up by main strength, struggled to a firm position on the slippery log, then to his feet, aided by a dozen outstretched hands. Every one had watched, breathless, the dangerous feat ; now all waved hats and shouted, and hurried the rescued into the car—panting and bruised—but safe and sound.

So far Louis had acted promptly and naturally.

But now the work was done, the old dread and horror came on him. He, the ex-prisoner, was afraid to face the man he had helped ; he felt that there was no place for him among the crowd of congratulating strangers. He hurried away and concealed himself in the baggage car. There he said to himself that his manhood was gone—and hated life. He was too late. The young athlete had not forgotten to ask who had served him so opportunely, and, missing him now, ran ardently into his hiding place, with beaming face and proffered hands. Deliverer and delivered stood face to face for the first time—recognized each other—and recoiled in dismay by a common impulse.

Louis first mastered himself. “I am glad you are alive, Charley Pelican,” said he, simply. “It was good to see any man’s head come up through the ties, breathing. I’m gladder yet now I find it was yours.” Courage came as he spoke. He looked openly at this man, with whom he had parted in bitter enmity, and he knew that the suffering of the frightful years between had wiped out his hate.

But Charley had no reply. He stood, with glance abased and clenched hands, the ruddy color his late peril had hardly chased from his lips ebbed away, his chest heaving.

“We might as well sit down,” said he, at last, as if conscious that an understanding must be reached then and there ; though how he didn’t know. He pulled out a trunk as he spoke, and the two seated themselves side by side. But when they were left alone by their fellows, each looked straight before him, and said not one word. For Louis the struggle was ended. He had put away thoughts of their quarrel in Millville, and Charley’s revengeful testimony at his trial. He remembered the years they had worked

and pleasured together ; his heart went wistfully toward Absalom, but he would not betray himself. Despised and rejected, it was not for him to make advances.

Charley battled with himself. He could not know that Louis was at peace ; he was afraid to face his contempt. But there was a tie between them which demanded all the satisfaction he could offer. He had sowed evil and reaped accordingly, and had gathered himself to begin life anew. He must make reparation to this man whom he had injured, but it took all his manhood to offer it. The back-bone of poor Charley's character was not generosity. He had found it out now. It was a proof that he had grown, that he was sitting beside Louis at all. Suddenly he turned. "I suppose I ought to say," cried he, looking directly at Louis' face, "that I never felt so like a sneak but once before—when I gave that testimony on the wrong side and helped to ruin you. If I'd gone into the Day of Judgment just now instead of the railroad car, I couldn't cut a worse figure!"

"I am *not* ruined." Louis knew it, oppositely, even while he loved Absalom. "Forget ! I do. I forgive every one but myself."

"Mollie forgave, too. I owe my chance to her. She is an angel."

Their eyes met. Both were full of tears. Nothing else was said, but they understood each other. All was right between them. Presently Charley exclaimed, in a totally different tone, "Congregation of the Righteous ! My samples have all gone to the bottom of the river. I must turn straight back to Chicago and get some more. If you aren't sorry you've met me, come too. We can be a happy pair." Charley

hummed a stave from *Pinafore* to express his feelings.

“Aren’t you ashamed to be seen with a man just out of States prison?” asked Louis, retreating.

“Yes, I *am* ashamed,” replied Charley, promptly. “I’d give anything to undo my share in it. But I’ve written up those books, old fellow, and I’ve opened new ones. Don’t you see how different I am?

‘Nothing of him that doth fade
But hath suffered Western change
Into something rich and strange.’

Just look now !”

Thus invited, Louis surveyed the handsome giant. The old magnetic charms of perfect physical beauty, of his front open and free, his eye clear and friendly, his frank tongue, were more than ever Absalom’s heritage. Absalom, over whom, in spite of all his weakness, falsity and sin, David yearned, and, bowing himself, cried, “O Absalom, my son ! my son ! would to God that I had died for thee !”

But Charley had begun a better life, and was already happy and successful therein. Perhaps it is scarcely possible to obliterate every trace of old habits. The building must stand as we have made it, stone by stone. He would never be humble or quiet. He would always drop easily into vernacular. He would never reason deeply, nor be delicately refined ; but his experience of sin and forgiveness and love would work in him a great tenderness of soul, and urge him to active helpfulness, and, supported thereby, he would win his way to heights seemingly impossible.

“*You’re* a good deal improved,” pursued Mr. Pelican, without waiting a reply. “*You used to have*

the most satisfied smirk sometimes. You don't act as if you thought you knew half as much as you did. You don't, do you?"

"Humpty Dumpty had a great fall," said Louis, ruefully. "No, I see myself a little plainer, I suppose."

Charley colored, and hurried to change the subject. "You've a wringer on hand, I see. That business"—with a judicial air—"is worked too hard. Now, my motto is shoe fly! My partners were in men's, youths' and boys' shoes, and I added ladies', misses' and children's. I fancy that covers the whole trade. We are Hingman & Chellis. What's the matter? Nothing wrong about this trade, I hope!"

"No," said Louis, reddening in his turn. "I worked for them a month, that's all."

"And got turned off. That's good!" Charley laughed loud and long. "You ought to have tried another line; used your gifts. Just get up, William Walker, and come along with me."

"I can't," cried Louis. "Knox is there. He'll turn me out of every situation I get."

"No, he won't, when I back you up." Mr. Pelican expanded his chest, drew himself to his height, and laughed. "I'll tell you what," after a few minutes reflection—"you can lead the orchestra at Paradise Mongrel."

"That won't do. I saw enough of that life at the Cereus. I know myself too well."

"Bless the boy! It's not a sample-room. It's my church. I seat the people. All the mothers are courting me for their daughters. My digestion is spoiled by the *petits soupers* they give me at eleven o'clock. I am the minister's right-hand man. He is

æsthetic. His name is Geoffrey Smith, and he writes it Smythe!"

The speaker came to an abrupt stand-still, as he caught sight of an irrepressible smile lurking about Louis' fine-cut mouth.

"I don't wonder you laugh," confessed he, ingeniously. "As I said at prayer-meeting, the other night, it's just nip and tuck with the devil the whole time, and generally it's tuck!"

Louis stared at his friend, doubtful whether he could be in jest or earnest, but Charley settled the question by exclaiming, "And I'm tapering off in slang, too. By Jove! it's easier to give up my dinner. But to business. The organist had a thousand dollars, and he's struck for twelve hundred. Now, if you'll go at the old price, you can have the place."

"I won't undermine any man. I'll turn into a walking wringer first." The disgusted look he cast at the sample article, tipped against the wall, was testimony to the worth of the resolve.

"Then we'll find something else. You can be Aramis, and I'll be Porthos; and if worst comes to worst I'll hunt up a solicitor to dine with."

Louis smiled a little at this free-handed casting of characters. Somehow all giants love that weak-pated old hero of Dumas. He fell easily into his former habit of giving Charley the reins, and followed him as of yore. But as they neared Chicago the prospect looked more and more downcast; starvation impended, and it was with a heavy heart that the agent approached Blue Island avenue.

Imagine their glee when, that evening, Charley burst into Mrs. Parish's caverns, exclaiming, "Come and rehearse, Tom Pinch. You're to play to-morrow. The music-man has decamped, bag and baggage. I

heard all about it at the club, and I instantly addressed them thus : " Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking I—hic—. Good evening, Mrs. Parish."

No man, who has ever been convivial in his habits, will altogether conquer the temptation to talk maudlin. It is one of the worst things temperance has to contend with—this propensity to tell drunken stories. Luckless Charley couldn't have chosen a worse occasion. But he went on, diffusely, " How do you do, Mrs. Parish. Louis *would* invite me to call on him as soon as he came back. You see I improve my opportunities."

" He ought to have known better," in a forbidding tone.

" Not at all. I should be here just the same if he hadn't," announced Charley, expanding his chest, as a big dog patronizes a little one. " I intend to freeze to him henceforth. I've come to steal him till bed-time."

Mrs. Parish's nose elevated itself visibly, and she put down her tallow candle with stiffening hauteur.

Louis looked from one to the other, blushing like a girl forbidden to accept her first invitation to a ball. He wondered why Charley couldn't for the moment see the necessity of using pure English. He couldn't see why this handsome, merry Hercules failed to win a welcome from his true old friend. But there was no room for doubt of Mrs. Parish's feelings. The boarding-house keeper's knotted kerchief had traveled to her left ear, and her elbows clicked against her sides with every word she said.

It hurt him that his only friends should so miscomprehend each other. He turned wretchedly from one to the other. Mrs. Parish sniffed inexorably. Charley chuckled, and said, " If you don't hurry I'll take you on my back." He went to the kerosened hall

for his hat, came back and stood with it in his hand, revolving hopeless plans of propitiating the stern deity, forgetful of Charley's aggravating enjoyment at the situation.

"Mrs. Parish," began he nervously, "I have promised to go out this evening with Mr. Pelican. I'll be back early."

"You'll please yourself, no doubt," was the unmollified reply. "I've got done expecting anything of boarders."

His landlady hadn't classed Louis in that obnoxious company for some time. He felt that she was shutting him out of her regard in the act.

"But he has brought me a chance to earn my living," he pleaded.

"Earn your fiddle-stick."

A pause, during which Mr. Allwood laid his hat back hopelessly on the piano, and stood looking at her with wistful hazel eyes, and Charley's smile grew audible in the folds of his pongee handkerchief.

Mrs. Parish stiffened more and more, until human nature could bear it no longer. The process of conge-
lation threw out heat. She jerked forward to exclaim, "I'd like to know what you gave for that silk rag," pointing to the unlucky *mouchoir* still enveloping its owner's mustache.

"Seven dollars and fifty cents, madam. I flatter myself the taste is unexceptionable—purple and corn color—my favorite combination." He shook it out by its upper corners, to display its beauties as aggravatingly as possible.

"Do you know that the young man you're roping off hasn't got a cent? He can't earn in six months what you fool away in a day. You'd much better let him alone, and go about your business."

"Mrs. Parish ! how can you?" exclaimed Louis, aghast. "I won't have you think so. I have no older friend than Charley Pelican. We were boys together—and you have been so kind to me!"

"Friend ! I should like to know what his friendship amounts to, if it wouldn't even equal a recommend to a boarding-house ! How came you going about the street with a blasphemous parrot and no dinner ? You *eat* enough for a dozen meals that night. You *were* hungry ; you can't deny it. And now he tips you a wink, and you'll dance to his piping straight to the devil. I'll take the liberty of speaking my mind. I don't believe in seeing you walking off like a monkey after a hand-organ."

"I walked into your house out of States prison, as you know," answered Louis, hurt bitterly. "You were very kind to me. But I might better have died in the streets—as I should but for you—if you have found me as little trustworthy as you imply." He was too deeply wounded to say more. But Charley, grown sober during the dialogue, interrupted :

"Madam, you are quite right." And he, too, doffed his cap and laid it beside Louis'. "Louis," said he, "would you mind stepping out a moment while I explain?"

"Don't you stir," cried Mrs. Parish, with a glance of implacable animosity at the hawk who was stealing her bantam. "If this young man can tell what he wants of you, he won't **stammer** at the truth before folks."

Louis face cleared, and the soft, girlish blush again sprang to his cheeks. He handed his would-be protectress a chair, and sat down himself on another, sidewise, with his arm over its back in the old way, while Charley took the piano-stool, and pocketed his

unlucky kerchief. There was something in Mr. Pelican's kind, respectful manner that plainly disclosed the new Charley.

"Mrs. Parish," said he, taking a little red volume, very much worn, from his inside coat, "will you please look at this?"

It was a photograph album, and held six pictures. He pulled them from their places, and laid them one by one in her lap. "These," said he, "are my father and mother; this is my sister Peace; this the man I'm afraid she'll marry—Francis Haythorne is his name; and the other two belong together. You can see by the date that I've carried Mr. Allwood's for more than one or two years. You recognize your protégé, if he is a trifle more high-toned touching the outer man than nowadays—and the lady—" Charley's voice, low before, softened, and he hesitated as if he was exposing something precious, and looked at Louis for approval.

"Let me see the lady," said the exile, hungrily, abandoning his chair, and resting on one knee by his picket-guard, so as to bring his head on a level with her yarn-stained hand and the picture.

Mrs. Parish, watching him keenly, could see that only this one face would ever bring the lover-look to her lodger's that rested on it then. He turned the card over, to read the handwriting across the back,

"Very truly your *friend*.—MOLLIE McCROSS.

"TOP TOWN, Dec. 1st."

"That is it," said Charley, quietly. "She is our friend, but some day she will be Louis' wife. *She* wasn't afraid to be kind to me. Now, ought you?"

Mrs. Parish put on a pair of silver-bowed spec-

tacles, and took the picture in her work-distorted fingers. She looked closely at the fair, true lineaments—studied them as only women study each other. Then she examined with keen intelligence the faces of the two men sitting expectantly before her, then the photograph again, this time with the profound scrutiny we women only vouchsafe the loved of our loved. When it was completed, she rose and handed the pictures back, with an old-fashioned courtesy.

"I am obliged to you, young sir," said she. "You are made of better stuff than you seemed. I have kept too many boarders to have any faith in men, but I shall be glad to see *you* here as often as you choose to come."

"Thank you," said Charley, still gentle in the spell of the influences to which he had opened the door. "I shall be glad to take you at your word. I am proud that you are willing to have me. To have won your respect makes me feel more a man."

As for Louis, he set his chair carefully against the wall, according to the habit Mrs. McCross had ingrained, and then ran back to shake Mrs. Parish's lean arms up and down, with wild enthusiasm. "It's all right, all right. You're two of the best people living," cried he, "and I'm so happy."

Mrs. Parish smiled sardonically. "Don't make a fool of yourself," said she; "and here, take your latch-key. I never offered one to a boarder before—'cos I never had a chance."

Louis got the situation. Of course he did. He was a born organist. Every one commended his style, and said fine things of his pedal playing. Monday he was formally hired, and he hurried to communicate his good news to his faithful ally. He was surprised that the nervous click of his landlady's knit-

ting needles didn't index unmixed pleasure, and she vouchsafed no word of commendation or sympathy, while he stood toying with his parrot—the image of a disappointed man. Polly shrieked, "Dear Louis, dear Mary," in joyful tones, clawed and gnawed all over him, and went through her repertoire of accomplishments, before her master got an inkling of the situation.

Mrs. Parish, meanwhile, eyed the pair with a belligerent glance. "There," said she, "your last button's shucked off. P'r'aps you're satisfied to set that animile down and listen to me."

Poor Poppy, abandoned at the word of command, toed over to the lady without a minute's delay, and climbed nimbly up by the steels in her hoop.

"Now you've got so many fine friends, I suppose you'll be wanting to leave here and be fashionable," said the boarding-house keeper. "You'll be thinking the butter rancid and the bed hard. All I've got to say is, you're welcome to. You pay five dollars and a half and you get five dollars and a half. I never try to keep a lodger. You can leave as soon as you like."

"But I don't like," answered Louis. "Let me stay. I am satisfied with what you give, and I wouldn't leave for anything. You are my friend. You make it home."

"Just suit yourself," was all the reply vouchsafed. But Louis thought that Wilhelmina's searches for feathers in the poultry-yard must have been henceforth blessed; and every day she drew his tea green and strong from her private tea-pot.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHRISTIE'S LAST LEVEE.

"Nothing to nobody."



WAITER found Mollie in the library, where we left her, and paused surprised at the tear-stained face the reigning queen of the evening turned toward him—a few harmless tears over the grave of a true friendship, and her own double desolation—a few bitter tears that she should have spilled her own cup of pain ever so little in a companion's life draught.

The servant hesitated, while he gathered all the details evident to survey, not omitting to make a rapid surmise as to those hidden, and then said :

"There's an Irish boy waiting at the door to speak with you. He says some one is dying, and you must go and see him."

"Answer that I'll be there directly." Mollie was almost glad to deaden her own struggle in some one else's pain, in her old fashion. She hurried up stairs to change her dress, and, meeting Peace, told her her errand. When she descended the stairs she found the boy standing in the vestibule, taking in, curiously, through its half-opened doors, the bright evening-dresses of the ladies, the bouquets and arches of green in the halls and parlors, the warm, yellow gas-light softening all, the band playing for merry dancers, the mellow hum of well-bred conversation. They stepped outside together into the raw, sleety drizzle of a February rain.

"Oh ! Barney O'Hara ; it's you ! Who wants me ?"

"Christie Malone. He's ben sick wid the horrors, and now he's got well, he ain't no better. The doctors see him, 'n' he'll have to kick, I guess."

"Christie Malone !" The name took Mollie back through the years to her early Sunday-school class, when said Christie, a slim, red-lidded, white-eyed, tallow-faced, caroty-topped youngster, "wouldn't kill himself workin' for no man," and lay a weight of care on her heart far greater than his starved *avoir-dupois*.

"He's not long out of Top Town ?" said she, inquiringly.

"Only two or three weeks. He's had the horrors bad, an' been weak and crazy-like by spells. The old women say his mother dropped off jes' so."

Barney was a lad of few words but much speed ; and Mollie kept up with him, out of breath, till they reached River street, where a row of crazy buildings, riddled with hiding places for malefactors and foul with crime, hived the wretched beings who crept there, not to live, but to drag out life as best they might.

"Which is it ?" said she, pausing to survey the street, and the black river hurrying past on its eastern boundary.

"Why, this one next is Hole-in-the-Wall, and the next, where you see the niggers an' hear the fiddle is 'Chain Locker,' and the one beyond, where the fight's goin' on, is 'White House Landing,' and Christie's is after that."

Safely past the aforesaid, they stumbled down some steps. Barney opened the half-hung door with a kick, and ushered Mollie into a long, low room.

The reeking stone walls, surmounted by a rotting

wooden frame, were still wet with last spring's freshet, and streaked with water condensed from the hot, moist air. A few moldy tatters of paper, adhering to the walls, mingled their quota of musty miasma with what poured up from outside undrained garbage heaps and inside filth. The rotting windows held scarce a pane of glass ; the planks of the broken floor tilted up and over with the tread ; the fast-falling rain ran in at every point and formed little rills in the hollows, or oozed and dripped sullenly through the cavities thereof. Three or four women, unshod, unwashed, were huddled into the driest places, chatting in hard voices.

Barney brought Mollie one of the rickety stools, that, with a can of whisky, furnished the apartment, and then plunged his hands deep in his pockets, and surveyed a mass of something in a corner, with an impossible face.

She went up to it, and on a wretched heap of straw, soaked with water from the wet floor, half covered with a bit of meal-sack and a ragged shawl, found Christie.

The lad's limbs, too well defined beneath their scanty clothing, were wasted into mere bones. His eyes burned bright in their deep, black caverns. The sallow skin, tightly drawn across the nose and chin, flamed into a vivid scarlet spot on either cheek. He half rose in his eagerness to welcome her, and then fell back with a gasping, hollow cough. "I knew you would come," said he, extending one thin hand to hers. He was so worn away that it seemed to hang on two loose bones. Mollie was half afraid to take it, lest it should part in her grasp. His voice, too, came faint and slow, with a long pause between each word.

One of the women handed Mollie a mug half full of whisky, pointed to him silently and went away. Kneeling beside him, Mary raised his head while he swallowed it, and then kept the place.

"I was afraid you wouldn't be here soon enough. I'm going straight to hell, but I want to tell you something before I go. You won't be hard on me, will you?"

His voice grew stronger under the effects of his draught, and his restless hands kept constant motion back and forth over the shawl, as he stared with horrible intensity into her face.

"No, Christie," answered Mollie, in her low, sweet voice; "I never think hardly of my suffering boys."

"I knew you wouldn't." His worn face settled into peaceful trust. He turned himself toward her with difficulty. "I felt somehow as if I had better tell you. It was me that took the money that sent Mr. Allwood to prison. Why, you look as if you was dyin', not me. Then it was true he was your sweetheart? Don't leave me," as she involuntarily shrank away. "You said you wouldn't be angry."

"How could you?" she began, in husky tones, and then stopped, with a convulsive shudder, and forced herself to resume her old half-kneeling posture.

"It was by Deacon McCross's advice I done it, an' he was a good man as ought to ha' known." The words came out doggedly, as if clinging to a favorite piece of self-deception. "He says as how ten years was long to take off one life, an' it was good for Mr. Allwood to suffer, seein' he was wild, an' if we both went we'd get three years each, an' if only I went I'd have to serve as a confirmed criminal. You was visiting somebody in jail that day—maybe you remember. I did as he said, but I wish I hadn't. I worked till I

got lung fever along side of Mr. Allwood, and he ever so patient like. His cell was next to mine. I often heerd him tossin' on his bed the whole night, an' he niver got sullen wid the hard words and blows. But when the day's work was done he'd lay his two hands together and give one great sigh as if the heart was breakin' inside him. I'm pretty much mashed an' pounded up, but once he got me off by means of speakin' to the warden. I meant to tell and make it right, but the place was such a hell I put it over from day to day, till he came up in the infirmary, where I was lyin'. 'I'm pardoned out, Christie,' sez he, 'an' I've a little money I want to give you, for you'll never get well, I'm afeard ; and we've worked at the same bench.' An' sez I, 'Do you know you're talkin' to the man that got you here?' 'Never mind,' sez he, with that beautiful forgivin' smile o' hisn, 'I'm through now, an' don't never tell nobody.' But I held onter his hand an' related how Knox and I planned and did the job, though he stuck to it it was no matter, an' he give me ten dollars, and encouraged me to be a man, an' I've niver see him since."

Whatever might have been Mollie's feelings, she ruled them back, and threw herself into the care of the sufferer, who turned his head from side to side and moved restlessly upon his pallet. She wiped the clammy drops from his forehead, with soft, kindly motion, and lifted him in her arms while he shook with the racking cough—just as she had nursed her father. But you might have seen the blood settled black about her nails, the unconscious force that clenched her hands while she listened had been so great. As she moved about him, trying vainly to ease his racked limbs, soothing with her mesmeric touch, *his pale lips unclosed in a smile, and he whispered,*

faint and low, "Little sister, have ye coom back?" Then in a moment the scene before his wandering mind changed. "Ha ! ha ! ha ! Aleck ! walk up to yer ghost—yer aristocratic bug-a-boo that's nothin' but dish-clouts on a currant bush ! Don't, mother, don't ! I couldn't help it. I was so hungry." And he would cower away, and exclaim under his breath, "Indeed, sir, I haven't once looked off. I couldn't work no faster. Shurely, ye wouldn't beat a man fur that?"

Another fit of coughing overtook him, and his muscles knotted, and his eyes rolled up and started out from their sockets in the fierce pain. The women, disturbed by the noise, came and stood around him, stupidly, till he fell back exhausted on the noisome straw, and then they returned to drink and chatter by the candle.

"I was goin' to tell you my life," said Christie, gathering his strength and pulling nervously at the bits of fringe on the old shawl. "Do ye notice the baby yonder in that woman's arms? I see her beat it jest now. It minded me of myself when my mother used to lick me. The day my sister lay a dyin'—did you know I had a sister? She looked like you. That's why I always felt soft to you. When she lay a dyin' just here—in this very corner where I be now—Great God, there she stands!" He struggled up in the bed, staring wild and terrified at the vision; but Mollie smoothed his damp, heavy hair with tender touch, and he sank back, and went on with a feebler voice; "She lay here so weak and gentle. Why didn't I die instead of her? Mebbe Christ would have took me then, but it's too late now. It was bitter cold, Miss, and there was no fire. I sat watching her as she lay gaspin' for breath, and one of the neighbors give me a pillow to put beneath her head, and mother

came and took it from her, yes, and the quilt that covered her, and sold 'em for drink. She jest shudered once, and died there before my eyes. Do you wonder I was hard an' cruel ? I never forgot how my sister went in the bitter cold—my mother cursing her without that the quilt would bring no more. The old man went next. We used to feel kind toward each other. Mother, she'd beat us both. But one morn they missed him, and when they'd sought him long, they seen him lyin' dead where he'd ben a drinkin.' They put the earth on him next day. Don't go," said he, catching the hand that lay on the shawl, as Mollie bent over him to hear the low murmur of his voice. "I feel easier because you look tender at me out of your soft, tearful eyes. I know you would speak of mercy and pardon, but there's no use. If I had my life to live again I shouldn't be no better. I had to fight for my rights, an' what's the good of askin' pardon for things you couldn't help doin'? There never was but one man that didn't harden the face on him when I came near, an' it was him I was hurtin'."

He lay still a few minutes, his mind wandering amid scenes of childish trial, his fingers, so damp and cold, toying with Mollie's patient hand. "I used to notice other folks happy and me miserable," he went on. "I wished I could kill 'em all. I had a dog once that I loved. But one day I see him playing 'round my feet, an' the thought came over me how he had a good time, an' I was all day beat an' starved an' kicked ; an' I took my knife an' cut his throat. He licked my hand as he was dyin', and looked in my face, so pitiful. He minded me o' my sister when she died. I threw him into the river, but he rose after, and kept starin' at me wid his dead eyes. I took to drinkin' to forget, but it didn't do no good. He used

to stand every place lookin' at me just the same. Sometimes it weren't him, but her, wid her throat cut."

Another convulsion of coughing seized him, the fifth in the two hours that Mollie had spent by his bed. She could see how much weaker than last time each left him. He felt this coming, and tried to speak before it took away the power. His voice rose to a shriek in his effort to form the words. "I'm glad I'm dyin'. I've got to burn forever in hell, but my mother shut the gates behind me the day I was born."

While the agony still wrung his limbs, a woman, leading a puny child by the hand, came and stood watching—watching him—withouth a word. When the spasm had passed he opened his eyes wearily, and knew her presence. "Oh, Johanna," said he, "I've used ye sore."

"I'm not come to say ill words to ye, Christie," she answered. "The blame is mine. Ye needn't lay our sorrows to yer heavy heart. Sure, it's not new to me to be alone. We're used to want. We'll follow ye soon." She staid a moment looking, with a tear in her eye, at his distorted face, with its features sharpened by death, its cheeks drawn in and chin fallen, and then went silently away. And the sufferer sank into a heavy stupor, and drew his breath with a hoarse snore from lungs slowly filling to the point of strangulation.

The night was fast growing into its own black struggle with death. The tallow dip, guttering on the table, seemed to fade and lessen in the stagnant air, now full of the terrible, cadaverous smell of soon-coming dissolution.

Some men, who had entered before with a pack of cards, played without intermission, except to curse their luck, losses and partners. One of the women

was dead-drunk, prone on the floor. The others sat tipsily watching the game, only waking into partial life when the whisky was handed about.

Hour after hour passed, and Mollie, trembling as a gazelle might, caged amid unclean beasts, sat with her fingers locked in the sleeper's, waiting to hear the last gasp for breath tell he was free.

It came. The flutter at his poor heart ceased. Mollie drew the lids over those death-blurred eyes that in a lifetime had shown the soul looking out only scenes of misery, and so composed the poor limp limbs that they could rest easily in the long slumber. Then she rose to go, her mission ended, when a woman burst into the room and hurried to the bed. "Pay me my rent, ye dirty thief. An' will ye be dyin' here, an' niver a cent paid? ye mean, cheatin' brute." She dragged him forcibly to the floor by one skeleton arm, and then staggered back frightened, as she found she held only a corpse. Her horror soon subsided into drunken apathy. She reeled forward, and, fixing her eyes with an effort on the body, exclaimed :

"Sure, there's niver a rag of clothes on him above what'll go to the buryin', an' he lyin' in my room over two weeks, come Monday. Dade, 'n' ye wouldn't be so hard-hearted as to refuse a poor woman that has been done out o' her rights ten cents fur a sup o' whisky?" She leered at Mollie, and, lurching forward, pushed her grimy fist into her face.

"Let the girl alone, old hag!" cried one of the men, hurrying forward, with an oath. "Tom Knox is a poor scamp, and in a streak of poor luck, but not bad enough to see *you* harmed. Let me lead you out of this." He took her gently in his arms—she was all but fainting—and bore her from the cellar into the open air.

The gray dawn just brightened the east, beyond the river, and the cold wind blowing in her face revived her strength. "The street's clear," said the man, setting her down against the wall, and drawing off to bestow a compassionate glance at her drooping form. "You are a kind woman, no mistake. You don't remember me. Just as well. Young Pelican gave me a capsiz once on your account. That one that's gone mentioned me, too. P'r'aps you'd like to hear farther. If young Allwood hasn't starved inside of a month, he's alive, an' worth sticking to. I'm going back to try another hand to earn my breakfast. Good morning."

Leaving Mollie clinging blindly to the wall for support, he ran down the steps into the den.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE GAME OF CHARACTERS.

"Though thou hast lain among the pots, thou shalt be as doves, having wings of silver and feathers overlaid with pure gold."

"Sing a song a sixpence."

"ouis," cried Charley, bursting into Mrs. Parish's caverns, "there is a tea at Paradise Mongrel, and you are to be on hand to play and smirk and grin and be a villain. I'll give you five minutes to get ready."

Louis was perched on a tall stool before a horrible old secretary, laboriously copying law papers. He

gave a final mumble over "from thence south ten chains to a stake; thence west fourteen chains six links to the place of beginning, including twenty acres, more or less," and dashed his pen into the ink-stand, with a dazed look on his pale face.

Charley, who now made his first visit to his friend's den, stopped to take in the interior, while Louis gathered his wits. The patched ingrain carpet figured a brown and red peacock, measuring three feet from head to tip of tail. He was on a vase resting on a balustrade, in turn surmounting a flight of green steps just the length of said peacock's tail. Beside this structure stood a rose bush containing six roses, each six inches in diameter. The alternate pattern was a cathedral in ruins, with a ship sailing out of its front door. Upon this superb but dingy tapestry were a yellow bedstead, which caved in in the middle like a coffin, a sanguinary washstand, with a hole in the top to contain the washbowl, a chair with its hind legs sawed off three inches. Mrs. Parish usually amputated her furniture thus, on the ground that it prevented boarders from tipping back. Louis had added the black worm-eaten escritoire before which he sat. As both its doors had lost their knobs, their contents were disclosed barefaced—a box of wristbands, one of collars, one shirt, the remains of his hat, and a roll of music-paper, part of it manuscript. His very ink-bottle had no nozzle, and he had improvised his penholder from a piece of stick.

Charley Pelican loved luxury dearly. He worshiped Hercules, but he liked to give the lion's hide a silken lining. Hence he looked aghast when he finished his inventory, but returned to the attack.

"My dear fellow, wake up. You must go. It's part of your business. You can't get off."

"Impossible," said Louis, turning scarlet. "Look at my breeches." He gave a despairing glance at his garments as he spoke, from their frayed hems to a suspiciously speckled spot on each knee, which a nice scrutiny might trace to Mrs. Parish's black linen thread and darning-needle. "You see how it is," added he, cheerfully, "I can't afford anything better; and though these will do in the choir of a Sunday, they wouldn't in a social gathering."

"They'd take the prize as curiosities," cried Charley, with a hearty laugh, in which the victim joined. "That patch in the seat is masterly, Louis. You are an inventor. But why have you no money? Where is your fire? Snips and sneezers! you'll die of cold. I can see every breath I draw. And that horrible odor of candle smoke! Where does it come from?"

"That," said Louis, sorrowfully, "must be my boots. I was afraid the tallow wouldn't do. I had nothing left for blacking, and Mrs. Parish was kind enough to give me some grease. You see I am subsisting as I can till next quarter brings me my wages."

"You look happy, after all," cried Charlie, astonished, rubbing his chilly hands, after an onslaught on the window for fresh air. "Do they always have sour-kraut in this house? Why, I would commit suicide in two days."

"Not at all," said Louis, his old, eager, boyish blush irradiating his cheeks. "The art of living is not to possess, but to dream. One can never possess *all* his desires except in dreams. Therein one grasps fabulous wealth."

"Breeches, for example, or blacking," said Charley, sardonically. Like most vehement people he was inclined to be angry at such a view of a wretched situa-

tion. Unwitting, Louis made matters worse when he spoke again.

"It is true, I am *sans culotte*," said he, with gentle patience, and a little airy smile that disdained to hide itself in face of tatters. "But to be without breeches is no preparation for death. To be willing to die, one must be still more a dreamer, for the best conception of the Afterward that even the best of us possess is only that it will be a long dream, such as we have at night, having strayed from our bodies. Or perhaps it may even be the dreaming to satiety of our day-dreams. That would be good. But it is naught but a vision in anticipation, at the most." The young man's eyes were on Charley as he spoke, but they had a far-off, intent gaze, as if he were looking beyond him out into the futurity he was peopling in fancy.

His hearer felt as if he were being made to listen to metaphysics in Basque, and rebelled. "My dear old fogey," cried he, coming over to give him a friendly shake, "I would like to know about that salary. I can't understand. Confess where you've bugged it to. If you don't, I'll hang you out of the window by the seat of those astonishing unwhisperables."

Louis looked very much like declining to answer. But his relentless friend advanced threatening.

"There were only one hundred and eighty odd dollars to get on the two months of this quarter," said he. "I was hired for that time on trial."

"Well," interjected Mr. Pelican, seating himself in the curtailed chair, and unconsciously assuming the very position and manner his father had when preparing to lecture his scapegrace heir.

"I paid Mrs. Parish seventy, and I owed forty dollars on the wringer, and I had to get boots and wristbands and collars. The boots were coarse and wore

out my stockings. I'll tell you what," cried he, with a sudden access of energy, "I can be a gentleman with a torn coat, but not with no heels to my hose. Then this old book-case. After I acquired so much, especially the shirt, I couldn't keep my things on the floor."

"Quite right," said Charley, counting magisterially. "Call it one hundred and thirty. Where's the rest?"

"I have to hire some one to blow the organ. I'm out of practice. I can't fill the place and have less than three hours a day."

"At twenty-five cents an hour. Forty dollars for two months is too dear."

"The man has only a left arm," deprecated Louis, guiltily. "He supports a wife and six children on what he earns at the church and the telegraph office carrying messages. I couldn't cut him down."

"He probably affords a fire. Besides, you've earned something copying." One should see Absalom's paternal severity to appreciate it. Louis gasped with embarrassment, and smiled at the young giant's absurd role, all at once. "A man must have his shirt washed," cried he, in a pet.

Charley's grandeur here suffered an unlooked-for fall, as he winked his left eye and put his fore-finger to it. "Teach your grandmother to suck eggs," said he, significantly.

"Well, if you must know," said Louis, chucking a piece of stick out of the window, to relieve his irritated feelings, "I gave it away. You needn't speak. Mrs. Parish said I was a fool for my pains."

"I admire her judgment," quoth Charley.

"I suppose you're right," said Louis, humbly; "but," with a sudden flash of impetuosity, "I'd do it

again in the same place. And I won't tell about it, either."

The fact was, Louis was gayly walking down Desplaines street, coming back from the law office with fifteen newly-acquired dollars in his pocket, when he saw Knox, escorted by two policemen, going to jail. He had felt guilty about this man ever since his return, knowing that Charley had discharged him on his account the very day they entered Chicago. He accordingly asked a second pair of officers, who were *en route* with other convicts, the particulars of the arrest, and was told seven dollars and costs for a drunken brawl the preceding night, which fine Knox had nothing to pay with. Thereupon Mr. Allwood hurried briskly along the road, rejecting a thought that persistently obtruded itself. Here then was Knox, his enemy, who had sworn never to let an opportunity slip to wrong him. This man was in danger. True, the mere matter of spending a few weeks behind the bars was of little moment, but should he be recognized his fate was sealed. Louis was saying to himself that he had no business to interfere with the law. He had no agency in bringing the rogue to this strait. He could not, however, help taking a different view of this prison justice—himself an example of its working. He held the belief, common to convicts, that it was revenge. He was able, too, to form an accurate picture of Knox's future in the grasp thereof. But he would wash his hands of it. When he adopted this phrase, he remembered that it was Pilate who brought it into currency. It struck him that it was an odd example for a Christian to follow. Divers sentences also ran in his mind. "Do good to them that persecute you." "Sick and in prison and ye visited me not." "If I have not delivered him that did me

harm, let my enemy follow and overtake me." Every one of the words that he had perused with admiration in his cell at Top Town, where his duty was only passive suffering, now confronted him, urging to a loathsome activity. He hated Knox. He was not, he told himself, glad to have him wretched, but he experienced a curious exultation when he saw how the wicked was caught in his snare. "The Lord," said he, "has rendered to him according to his works," and with the exclamation he felt peace fly his heart.

It is hard to define what it is that takes us against our wish, and holds us in a grasp we cannot slip, to the steady contemplation of a hated possibility. It carries us out of ourselves, above conscience, that tame registrar of duty, and shows us a new higher plane, where we may set our feet. "I will stick to simple duty," said Louis. "I need the money, and I forgive him." Whereupon he despised himself. He had found his leader in the stricture of prison discipline. Christ had come to him in agony ; had not called him from cool shade and friends and merriment to follow him in the dusty highway of life, but had walked with him in the midst of the furnace seven times heated. It seemed to Louis now, in this inward tempest about Knox, that it would have been easier for Jesus to have staid in heaven, chatting affably with his Father, than to have gone and lived with him in that horrible prison at Top Town. Then he knew he was denying his Lord, and yet he hated Knox so that there was wrath at this imperative of Christ's example in his heart, when he turned about toward the Police Court, to pay the fine and free his enemy.

It took every cent he had in the world, and when he ran down the street toward the jail he was buffeted about in a fury of hate and anger, and a sense of

alienation from his best friend. But when he presented the order for release, the warden said, significantly, "You are letting loose a hard customer, young man. He is hurrying to the gallows at top speed. I've half a mind to detain him on suspicion of worse doings than a drunken row. I'm nearly certain he's due at Joliet." At that moment Louis was glad he was there. "If he is one of your people, he'll come back soon enough," said he.

"True," said the warden, laughing. "That's certain as taxes. I may's well lend him a chance;" and he went to give the order.

"Knox," said Louis, who had waited outside till the man emerged, "I heard them say, in there, you looked like a fellow due at State's Prison. Chicago isn't safe for you. I thought I might as well tell you. Try New Orleans."

And he hastened away to meet Mrs. Parish, with her market basket, looking thinner, grayer, and more forlorn than Louis could remember seeing her before. She brushed past him without notice, but caught up with him again as he reached her door.

"Did you pay that Knox's fine?" quoth she; "some one did; I met him out."

"I suppose so."

"Fool and his money soon parted," was the amiable retort, delivered with a derisive sniff, and clicking of her elbows sharply against her sides. "You're too shiftless even for a boarder. I never see one of them even do such a trick."

But neither his landlady's disapprobation, nor Mr. Pelican's, could prevent Louis from being glad he had let Knox out. One glance at his cadaverous, cowed face had softened the young man's heart. The self-denial the act entailed was not grudgingly borne.

Charley more than half suspected the true story, but when the gentle dreamer awoke to assert himself, Mr. Absalom, like every one else, felt afraid to press the mooted point.

“ You must let me buy your things—instantly. Do, there’s a friend.”

“ No,” said Louis, grateful, but resolved. “ I must stand on my own feet. The passive, shut-up life is behind me, I once more act and dream. Why, old fellow, I take pleasure in being cold, because, when the time comes to be warm, I will feel myself a man, able to endure to the end. I am happy in this healthy suffering. Once I was kept warm for economy, as being only a machine.” He jumped off his stool as he spoke, and straightened his slender figure, and clapped his thin fingers together enthusiastically. And his brown eyes lighted, and the strength that gave birth to his hope curved his beautiful mouth in smiles.

“ Don’t be snippy,” said Charley. “ If you won’t borrow money, you must clothes. Wear some of mine.”

“ You are kind, but they’re a world too wide for my shrunk shanks.”

“ They can be tucked up. Come to my room and try. Don’t be a sarcophagus, there’s a duck.”

While Louis was hanging back trying to escape, Mr. Pelican swung him over his broad shoulders, and began descending the stairs.

They chanced upon Mrs. Parish at their foot. “ Gracious Proverbs!” cried she. “ What be you about?”

“ He won’t come quietly, and I’m compelling him for his good,” said Charley, laughing. “ Now, young man, will you do as you’re bid, or shall I play horse all the way to my room?”

"I don't—" began Louis, who was afraid to face Paradise Mongrel, and hoped to slip out yet.

But Charley annihilated his objections with a second clutch, to be a little discomfited at finding Poppy atop the load. She was prowling around when they came down, and had made haste to climb up by Louis' coat tails, to her favorite perch on his shoulder. "Dear Louis, dear Mary, ptchoo," quoth she, eagerly, and spread her yellow wings, and glared with eyes of claret-colored fire at all assembled.

"Shan't he go!" cried Master Pelican, who felt respect for her.

"Go to work, go to work, earn your salt," exclaimed she, just as she heard Mrs. Parish hourly admonish the sluggish Nora.

"Go yourself," retorted that lady, hooking her up, and preparing to carry her off.

"Ya, ya, ya, ya, ya," screeched the angry bird, sidling to and fro, and making dabs at her bearer.

"She's clear boarder," said the landlady, stopping at the end of the hall, to hurl the remark at Louis. "It's all the thanks I ever get. Don't be like her, now."

The poor fellow, thus deserted, was fain to succumb; and Charley speedily arrayed him in fine style. "There, stand off, so I can get the toot in scramble," cried he. "How doth the little crocodile improve his shining tail! Don't you look funny! You must cultivate repose of manner, and above all things sidle when you can, it will improve your tourname."

Paradise Mongrel was composite in its architecture as its services. There was the beautiful auditorium in a building by itself, and the minister's study at the right thereof. Then, in another building,

were the Sunday-school room and library, and double parlors of the Mongrels, all opening into each other, conveniently for tableaux. Across the quadrangle stood the sexton's house, and the church kitchen and evening school-rooms completed the whole. All the peaked roofs and turrets looked different ways, and were crowned with bird-houses ; and all the windows were of different shapes and patterns. The parlors were full of flowering plants, canaries and ferneries ; the Sunday-school boasted a cage of pet squirrels (the property of the infant class), and the library was a perfect museum of Scripture and missionary curiosities. The place, in fine, from the flower-beds, visible through the winter snow in the quadrangle, to the pretty Eastlake carpets on the floors, and the swinging easy chairs in the parlors, was redolent of home thoughts and home instincts. It was a real meeting-house, as well as church.

Mrs. Parish had already commended Charley as "actyve in the congregation," and Louis soon found it so. Absalom ushered him in with a superb air, and introduced him to his partners—Mr. Hingman, who was portly and positive, and said, in the course of conversation, that he regarded thousand-dollar organs as all fuss and flummery ; and good-natured Mr. Chellis, who failed to recognize in the slender, delicately-handsome organist, the dismissed and despised shoemaker. Mr. Chellis, who himself possessed chestnut hair, and soft peachy complexion, carried on his arm, a haughty, exquisitely-beautiful blonde, Veronica Overbury, who was presently led to the piano to sing, which she did like a brilliant icicle. Some one soon after told Louis that she was going to educate herself for a professional musician.

Groups of children in silken attire strolled up and

down, arm in arm, occasionally lessening in numbers as the enthusiastic glee in the library over "Still Pond no Moving," grew wilder. Masters and misses played chess and checkers, in the recesses of the room, and the feminine entreaty, "Beat me if you can, as if I was a boy," denied itself in puckered lips, and intent little studious frowns, as the mandate was obeyed. Youthful couples sat in the wide window-seats, and essayed more subtle games than ivory pawns can figure, be their general never so crafty. Mothers and aunts cut cake, and bustled about the kitchen, so savory with coffee; fathers discussed specie payment and protection, from the dignity of handsome broad-cloth, and weight on Change. Sure never had religion and her dear daughter geniality better dwelling, than beneath the birds' nests of the Mongrels.

Now came a little flutter of excitement, as when, at the bidding of the school-boy's tap, the sanded board bastions to deck itself with orderly figures. Little tables were scattered all over the room, the company gathered about them in trios and quartets, to be served with supper, brought by the young ladies of the church, who, in the modest glory of white ruffled aprons, looked like Eves radiant from Paradise, on household thoughts intent. So thought the members of the "Prayer, Billiard and Charitable Association," who were out in full force, forgetful that these very damsels waged war as an opposition club—the "Anti-Gossip Sewing Society," which every Wednesday in those very parlors belied its name.

Absalom, after settling Louis in a corner, stayed to whisper in his ear :

"Who pants for glory needs a short repose,
An angry breath will dissipate your clo's,"

and hastened to proffer his services to the beautiful Veronica.

Louis soon after beheld him, girt with a napkin, and intrusted with a huge tray of coffee cups, while the young woman, indifferent as chaste Diana, moved beside him with a pitcher of cream. They had hardly made the round of the parlor, when the Rev. Geoffrey Smythe called him away to confer about the evening amusements, and his friend proudly watched the young giant towering in the center of an animated group, looking, to his thought, as fit to support the church on his broad shoulders, as one of its own gothic pillars.

"First, you are to play," announced he, coming over; "then you must sing. Then every one is to go into 'Characters.' Did you see that beauty whose tray I carried? That's her friend, yonder, Lornhamah Fillibrun. Isn't she a wild rose? By Jove, Louis, she's like the sun on a green board to me. I warp every time I see her. She sings just opposite me in the choir, you remember. Wouldn't you like an introduction?"

"Oh, no!" said Louis, miserably. "I am all the time thinking of these Falstaffian breeches. Please don't."

"But it's your duty," persisted Charley, seriously. "She is one of your singers. She'll think it strange if you don't show her some attention. You would like friends; now's your chance to prove yourself friendly."

"Wait till I have a little confidence in myself. My jaws are as rusty as an old coffee-mill. I can't grind out small talk; everything will be coarse. I hate myself," cried the young man, in an agony of *mauvais honte*.

"Nonsense," said the inexorable Charley; "we

your duty. Shall I carry you? I'd just as lief." Thereby he led him in unwilling bondage across the parlor to a slender, hardly-matured woman, whose gray, ribbed eyes wore a perpetually inquiring look, as if she was standing in the midst of a foreign land without its language. Beautiful she certainly was, and charming—more charming to men like Absalom than she would be when citizenship in the world had taught her its tongue, and so changed her glance of timid, albeit unsuspecting, innocence to contemptuous self-reservation or shrinking fear. For, disguise it to ourselves as we can, in the fire of our own bitter experience we forge the key of every man's secret chamber. Nor is it possible for us to walk with unread heart in a world where all were made after one image, with every word in their language the noun of an experience.

"The minister wants you," remarked Mr. Hingman, hastening toward them. "The people will talk better when the music begins; so please be as brilliant as possible, Mr. Allwood."

"I'm the boy to make it lively for the minister," said Absalom, sighing, as he rose disappointed of his chat, and striding away with the air of the last of the Huggermuggers; while the musician went to the piano, and began obediently to play quadrilles and waltzes. True to Mr. Hingman's prediction every one began to chatter at once. Forgotten in the noise, Louis, who hadn't touched a good piano since his entrance in Top Town, played on, living over the old memories. He was startled to find the parlors suddenly still, and to hear Mr. Geoffrey Smythe, standing beside Charley, say :

"I am happy to offer you, as the æsthetic part of our evening's programme, an original poem, by our or-

ganist, entitled 'The Hammock,' being an illustration of Chopin's Nocturne in G, Op. 37. We will now listen to the dream and the interpretation thereof."

Charley, who had secured music and poem in a stolen hunt through Louis' cupboard that very day, now thrust the bundle into his hand, so there was no escape. Louis mustered his courage, and read as follows :

" After day's sultry heat,
Rest, and I'll rock thee, sweet.
Lightly thy hammock swings beneath this spicy shade,
While the large southern moon,
Silvering the still lagoon,
Steals through thy mossy curtains long gray tangled braid.

Each fire-fly has lit
His small allumette
'Mid the soft gloom the bloomy orange-trees embower ;
The yellow jessamine,
High from yon blasted pine,
Flings from a perfumed hand its golden shower.

Swaying thee dreamily,
Bitter my musings be,
Though swells my melody
With lover's fantasy ;
Would that thy little head, so calmly lulled to rest,
By brooding thought of me—
Love's watchful jealousy—
Might stir oppressed ;
Wakened thy calm, soft eyes,
Through passion's witcheries,
Roused be that head, all yellow tressed.

* * * * *

Her bosom's tranquil rise,
Where my poor rose-bud lies,

Betrays nor fear, nor maiden vision of delight,
 Now rings the evening bell,
 Far o'er the stilly fell,
 Its warning of good-night.

Peace, envious bell !
 She sleeps too well—too well !

* * * * *

Oh, my darling, do not waken,
 For thy lover rocks thy nest ;
 • O'er thy couch wild rose has shaken,
 With fond care, her flowery vest.
 Lightly o'er the broad savannahs
 Floats the zephyr to thy cheek,
 'Mid the flags of our bananas,
 Playing friendly hide-and-seek.

In the evening's deepening umber,
 Thus caressed by hand of thine,
 Tell me, tell me, could I slumber,
 Thy face bending over mine ?

Lily-hearted, still I love thee,—
 'Tis love's restlessness would fain
 From thy star-like calmness move thee,
 Till thou taste love's honeyed pain.

At thy peril, love, thy waking,—
 Apple blossoms, wooed by rain,
 Thus their airy height forsaking,
 Never bloom nor smile again.

Sleep and thy hammock frail
 Full daintily shall sail,
 A bark secure, over sleep's shoreless sea !
 Thy skiff thy lover'll guide,
 Watchful and true he'll bide,
 Over the dreamy tide his song thy helm shall be.

Hark to the whip-poor-will !
Sad from yon dusky dell,
With woeful plaints of his imaginary care,
Now from the bough o'erhead,
Where swings his frolic bed,
The mocking-bird repeats the tale with merrier air,—
Lover nor bird the cruel warbler deigns to spare.

And the bells, repeating,
Warn of moments fleeting.

Oh, I weary of thy sleeping,
Though its lullaby I sing ;
One still smile from love out creeping,
O'er my grief would healing fling.

She awakes ! Oh, wild suspicion,
She is laughing at my pain !
Ah ! a lover'd feel contrition,
He'd not mock love's labor vain !

A whip-poor-will I seem
Grieving a summer dream,
Vainly I tune my melancholy note of woe.
Thou art the mocking bird,
Thou the complaint hast heard,
With trills of laughter, careless that it's true.

Love's vision's sadly o'er,—
I'll rock thy couch no more.
As the stars wax and wane ;
Sing to thee ne'er again, all in vain !
Oh, thou cruel little sleeper, thou shalt learn the sad refrain,
'All in vain.' ”

Louis read the poem well, and then he played it well on the piano. Perhaps the restlessness in the song was less marked in the music, but his delicate clearness and dainty rhythm made all stand intelli-

gently before the listeners. When he finished he saw that he had won his audience. Mr. Geoffrey Smythe came to pay his compliments in person. Charley, with Lornhamah Fillibrun on his arm, gave him a glance full of satisfaction. Presently, as every one began talking again, Louis lost himself in a pleasant reverie. He saw the future brightening before him, and Mollie was the fair figure in his dream.

A sweet, cold voice beside him brought him back to the Mongrels' parlors with a frightened start, but it was only Veronica Overbury, arrayed in pale blue, like an icicle in a shady nook.

"I beg your pardon," said she, severely ; "Mr. Chellis was coming to perform the introduction, but was called back. Do you like classical music ?"

"Sometimes ! some authors," answered Louis, still in the glamour of his memories, turning about with his fingers on the keys to cast a puzzled look at her.

"You play Chopin ; will you ?" pursued she, with a little nervous flutter in her crystalline voice, that betrayed what the effort to speak cost. "Why, this is delicacy itself. It has the tenderness of the primrose—it seems fragile, like a humming-bird," she cried, with an eagerness vividly in contrast to her former frigidity. "What is it ? What does it mean ?"

"It is the Impromptu Fantasia," said Louis, smiling ; "and I can't tell what it means absolutely, only what I think of when I play it." He never was afraid beside his dear piano. There was strength in it, because it obeyed him. His simple serenity reassured his auditor. Her face became bright and animated. She drew a chair close to the instrument, and seated herself with an expectant air. "Now begin," said she.

"I always imagine a warm summer night, when the moon is very low behind the trees, and the stars

shine large and soft. The wind seems to whisper and rise in little gusts, with now and then a long, deep swell that dies gently away. And then through my mind comes a strain of *Die wundershönen Monat Mai* —that Schumann wrote—because I am in love, we'll suppose—and that sort of air runs in a man's head at such times." Veronica looked inquisitively at him, and Louis hurried into this explanation: "And afterward I get excited, and the wind makes an accompaniment to my feelings. And next, the last hour I spent with my lady comes in as a little song. It was very sweet, but very tantalizing. You notice how whatever she says she always seems to take back, like the old ballad that finishes every verse with m'happen I may. You see all is left unsettled—just so—and, afterward, when I return and think of the mild, fragrant evening, I am not at peace with myself, and after a great inward struggle, the thought of this lady's exceeding loveliness comes singing like a full sweet tenor through my unrest, and I am once more quiet."

"That is very good," said his auditress. "You played it all out plainly. I can't. I have neither touch nor taste. My fingers are long enough, I'm sure, but on the piano they are quite too short. I have nothing musical but love of it and self-contempt. Do you like Chopin better than Mendelssohn?"

"No," said Louis, conscious of the cheerful exhilaration this little contact with a refined and beautiful woman rightfully gave, and longing to please. "Sometimes I like one—sometimes another, as I feel. There are masters enough for every mood. When I am innocently child-like and cheerful I like Haydn. When I am sad, Schumann. If I am thirsty for bright character studies there are all the modern classics.

But at the bottom of my soul I love Sebastian Bach first and best. He is strong and firm, and full of good cheer. I study him every day."

"I thought every one preferred Mendelssohn or Chopin," said Veronica. "My friends are divided, but they never get beyond the two, except Etta Karl, who thumps Beethoven."

"That is easily explained," said Louis, opening like a crocus in the sun, with a smile. "Chopin is the poet of romantic passion, and Mendelssohn is the prophet of youth, of pure pleasures, simple emotions, and love that has no fear. Before we leave the peace of youth behind us, he is all most of us need. But later, in sin, perplexity, the agonies of waiting, loss, despair, and self-will, other authors must be sought to answer to our more subtle and tangled passions. Mendelssohn has only set the beatitudes to music. He perpetually says, 'blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'"

"That's worth saying," said Veronica, decisively. "Will you play from Schumann? Can you play Arabesques, and Blue Devils, and all the morsels he has published in groups? I have heard some of them. Can you sing '*Im Wunderschönen Monat Mai?*'"

Louis both could and did. After the poet's song came *Lotus Blume*, and *Widmung*. He had an earnest listener. Her bosom heaved with excitement as he embodied the words of consecration with his exquisite tenor, and rendering—"Du bist mein Ruh, du bist mein Frieden, mein guter geist, meine bestich Ich." The dear boy knew well how to give voice to those adoring words. He had the dedication and the deity.

"I feel it when I hear it," said Veronica Overbury, experiencing all at once a sense of opposition, as if she

had been led to more perfect concord of mood with this stranger than she liked. "I can respond to it as I do when I see a mother caressing her children. It makes my heart beat. I hate children. Will you play *Warum?*?" By this time she was very nearly congealed again. But she yielded a little to the passionate, unsubmissive question Louis evoked. "That is satisfactory," said she. "A real appeal from fate! I can't do it. My whys are all because. Mr. Chellis has told me you are a professional musician, and willing to give lessons. I would like to take of you." She was freezingly condescending by the time she finished this announcement; but Louis was happy. He had his first pupil—joy enough for one day. They had hardly arranged their hours when Mr. Chellis approached, and Louis needed no prompting of experience to see in the smile that transfigured her statuesque features, or her confiding, unconscious nestling toward the handsome fellow, why she was angry at showing enthusiasm over *Widmung*. The poor child was jealously guarding her open secret, all too patent to the man who should least have known it.

But Mr. Chellis was the personification of amiability. He was, moreover, charged with an errand. "You must come and play characters. Mr. Geoffrey Smythe is to go out, and we want to puzzle him, if we can. He prides himself on being up in everything, you know. *Anaxagoras* is the word, though it only admits of ten players. Hosts of us are going to listen. You are for one of the a's. If you take *Aristides*, or *Michael Angelo*, or the *Artful Dodger*, he'll guess in a minute, but if you'll have yourself, he'll never think."

"And answer questions?" said Louis, in an accent of terror.

"Certainly; all he asks."

Louis demurred, but suddenly became conscious that Veronica Overbury, who was waiting for Mr. Chellis's escort to a seat, was gazing intently in his face. Her glance said plainly, "This man is ashamed, or hiding something. I suspect him." Louis looked imploringly toward Charley, but he was out of eye-shot, doing the magnificent, as usual.

"Hang it, man," urged his unconscious persecutor, "why do you blush and tremble? What have you ever done to be ashamed of? Every one has been told of the dodge. You can't get out of it."

"Possibly Mr. Allwood don't care to rip his past life open," said Veronica Overbury, her haughty mouth curved into something like disgust, Louis fancied, of him. "Very well," assented he; "where are the players to sit?" and he went and took the fifth chair in the circle, miserably enough. The pith of the game was to discover each separate character, and then by piecing together the initials of their proper names, find the ring word.

Mr. Geoffrey Smythe directed by a chorus of voices to begin with Mr. Chellis, instantly asked who was his most noted contemporary. And was told "The devil."

"Where was your most noted residence?" inquired the malicious minister, divining the character instantly.

"Boston," retorted his intended victim.

"Did you ever go to school?"

"Went to Harvard College."

"What was your profession?"

"Lawyer."

"What kind of a man were you?"

All was going well, but here Mr. Hingman couldn't

refrain from indulging in a joke at his partner's expense. "He raised Cain," cried he, emphatically.

"Raised Cain," repeated the divine, thoughtfully; "doubtless it is some Southern politician. What kind of cane?" said he.

Then every one hushed the interloper, indignantly, and Mr. Chellis said he wasn't certain. Everybody here cried "For shame! yes, you do know, too;" which induced Mr. Geoffrey Smythe to ask his father's nationality, and how old he was when he died. Whereupon he pronounced him Adam, and began to recriminate him. "How could you live in Boston?" cried he.

"I supposed every noted man lived in Boston," said Mr. Chellis, innocently.

"When did you graduate at Harvard?"

"I supposed everything good began at Harvard."

"Just have the kindness to say how you came to be a member of the legal profession?"

"I made the first argument on record in a criminal case," replied he, sulkily, "and got damages."

"Perhaps you'd better go on," cried Charley, "he has the best of you."

The divine laughingly relinquished the discussion, and guessed Napoleon, and Ninon de l'Enclos, and Francis Xavier, who came next with ease. Then he moved his stool toward Louis, and inquired his age.

All the players, to whom Mr. Hingman had carefully confided the joke, grew attentive, while the young man answered, "Between twenty and thirty," in a faint voice.

"Were you handsome!" inquired Mr. Geoffrey Smythe, who was getting terribly skillful with practice.

Now, though Louis seldom thought of his face, except to wash it, he knew perfectly that he was not

a homely man, but he didn't want to say so. He accordingly blushed and hesitated, while the audience enjoyed his confusion, till Charley came to the rescue and exclaimed : "Of course ; he's a love ; handsome as Apollo!"

"So is every young man, in his mother's opinion," agreed the dominie, enjoying his little sarcasm. "Were you a good man?"

"I hope so." This time Louis blushed again, modestly, but he had found his tongue.

"Then perhaps you are St. Sebastian. St. Sebastian was handsome and young. Were you shot with arrows?"

"Only the darts of outrageous fortune," owned Louis, smiling, a little more at ease. Perhaps he had been frightened at a shadow.

"Well, you may be Endymion. He was all you say. Were you in love?"

"Yes."

"That's satisfactory. Were you wedded?" Mr. Geoffrey Smythe was now rubbing his hands with joyful expectation of running down his poor timid hare at once.

"No."

"Then it couldn't be Endymion. It might be Adonis—he came to an untimely end ; but then, he never was in love. Bacchus perhaps. Did you ever get drunk?" cried Mr. Geoffrey Smythe, revengefully.

The hare was now really close pressed, though the hunter didn't know it. "Not very often," said Louis, blanching.

"No oftener than you could help? Some poor literary devil, beyond doubt. Perhaps Goldsmith in his youth, before he clave to the cup which cheers but *not* inebriates. Ever write?"

"Sometimes ;" the hare was doubling.

"What?" the hounds were in full cry.

"Poetry."

"I knew it ! The choice is Goldsmith or Tasso. Was your poetry written to please a lady ? We'll see about Leonora."

"Some of it."

"It is certainly Tasso then. You say the lady was beautiful, and you were poor ; I thought so. Answer," cried the hunter in full chase. "Were you ever in prison."

"Of course," interfered Charley, hoping to see him at fault. "Ask him if an angel ever came to see him there, as the Bible says."

"Did there ?" inquired Mr. Geoffrey Smythe ; "it might be Joseph in that case ; he had dreams. I can't speak for the poetry, though."

"Yes, there was such an angel," answered Louis, believing he told the truth, for had not Mollie visited him ?

"What were you there for ?" asked the hunter, recovering the scent.

Characters was a popular game. There was no escape through the crowd of eager listeners surrounding them. "The charge was stealing," acknowledged Louis.

"Then it's not Tasso," said the good man, disappointed. "Who can you be ! Unless you're the Old Testament personified, I'm nonplussed. Where was this prison ?"

"Must I answer truly," cried the hare, struggling faintly in the clutches of the dogs.

"Yes, yes," chorused Paradise Mongrel. "Tell the truth, it's the rule of the game."

Louis reeled to his feet. It was the end of him

happiness—of all. He faced the new-found friends who had so unconsciously betrayed him, and answered as bravely as he could.

“It was the Penitentiary at Top Town.” Then the assembly seemed to divide of itself, and in a moment he had fled, alike beyond its censure and its rejection.

CHAPTER XX.

PARADISE MONGREL.

“Sing! Sing! What shall I sing?”



HEN Louis crept from the congregation of the righteous that horrible night, he felt that he must never return. The small, white moon was icily beaming over his path, and he drew his thin garments together, and fled desperately up the street, blind and dizzy with shame and misery. He kept increasing his pace as he went, and at length broke into a run, which the sound of feet behind him soon led him to accelerate. The stranger, however, gained on the distance, and seeing it, Louis turned about suddenly and waited, with a half intention of knocking the man down when he came near enough, but before he could execute his thought, he was swung lightly upon Charley Pelican’s broad shoulders and borne off helpless.

“By—well, seeing I’m fresh from church, call it Prescott’s Conquest of Mexico!” quoth the young giant. “What a ninny you are, my child, to run like

a hare when I'm looking for you. Let's go to my room and talk it over!"

"What's the use?" said Louis, miserably, from his perch. "My chance is lost."

"Not a bit of it," cried Charley. "I'm going to back you up."

And the good-hearted fellow comforted and scolded till Louis promised to be courageous, and face the difficulties of his position among the Mongrels; indeed, there was nothing else to be done. The place was too valuable to lose. So Saturday night saw him again conducting his choir rehearsal to all eyes quiet and composed as if he were not burning with shame and faint from self-distrust; as every one felt he was, and hoped he would be. For Paradise Mongrel boasted a quartette, which refused, as became a respectable quartette, to taint its purity by association with a jail-bird. Is it right to take bread from the mouths of honest men like Duck Jones, and give it to criminals? Duck Jones's morals were a trifle suspicious as regards the flowing bowl, and a desire to pay his debts, but that's neither here nor there. He wasn't a convict. The majority of Paradise Church were of the opinion that to keep Louis would be setting a premium on crime.

A few days after the luckless sociable, the unpopular organist entered his boarding-house with hanging head and lagging step. He found himself sent to Coventry by all his late acquaintances. As he entered the hall a loud tinkle greeted his ear, proceeding evidently from the parlor, and a duet of quarrelers accompanied the same.

"Yes," exclaimed a thin female voice, "you can either tune it for a dollar and a half and have your dinner here, or you can have two dollars and go with-

out. I won't throw away my vittals reckless. But stir you sha'n't till them traps is packed safe in again. I won't have 'em throwin' about fur them boarders to handle. So, smoke *that* in your pipe. Like it or lump it."

"I tell you vat I do. I trow all dese hammers down an' geump aus de vindster—dat I vill, ef you don't go away and leave me mit myself. Mein Gott ! vash a voomans is dis !" retorted the miserable musician, whom Wilhelmina had called in to rehabilitate her piano, and over whom she now stood, dusting-rag in hand, poking under the strings, and scolding her worst, as was her habit in similar cases.

"Go ! Not a step will I budge ! I've got a right in my own parlor, I'll have *you* understand before you're a minit older, and if it isn't fixed correct Mr. Allwood'll know. You sha'n't have a cent. It's against my principles to pay for ill-done work. I never will—never—never."

In short, Mrs. Parish was taking a long-contemplated step. Louis must practice, and the instrument must be fit to practice on. All that day did she mount guard as the work of softening the hammers and putting in new strings, oiling away squeaks, and otherwise patching up the old machine proceeded. At evening, when all was done, she summoned Louis, and bade him play Marlbrook, while she flung herself into a chair and wiped her face on her apron. "There," said she, "I'm as tired as if I'd done a month's washing, and all for a boarder. I never expected to see this day."

The Young Men's Benevolent, Prayer and Billiard Association yielded, after much grumbling, to the wish of their President, and extended Louis an invitation to become a member thereof. But Charley, who

brought the message, was discomfited by a point-blank refusal.

"Why, it would give you an assured place at once—you must join. If you don't care for the ivories, just attend the prayer-meeting. You believe in prayer?"

"Yes, I do believe in prayer," said Louis, blushing as if making a confession. "I can't talk of it, it's too holy—too sacred. But I mustn't go to that meeting, for if I did it wouldn't be to pray, but to buy my place as organist."

Charley puckered his mouth for a whistle, but this case was too desperate for such consolation. He accordingly stood on his head, and then bent back and surveyed Louis, with his head between his knees. Encouraged by this active remedy, he recovered his equilibrium, and exclaimed: "Never mind, you're a trump, any way!" Then, after a pause, "How do you get on about music scholars?"

"Badly enough! Mr. Chellis coaxed Miss Overbury to begin, but she couldn't bring herself to endure the annoyance. If I hadn't music engraving I should be poorly off. But that grows. No one wants to take lessons of a jail-bird."

"Jail-bird!" It brought a curious thrill to Mollie when she heard the name, but it wasn't like Louis' pain at bearing it. *She* was faithfully resolved to become Mrs. Jail-bird—one life with her lover—and assuming the burden, halved it, for she found that, notwithstanding its ignominy, she could be a Christian. But *Louis* carried not only all his own load, but what she was destined to bear also, for did not he give it to her patient shoulders? Love is a curious arithmetic table. Its logic is hopeless. It divides a load to treble

it. Its trebled burden itself furnishes the strength that makes it bearable.

But Antoinette Fairweather and Lavinia Green had no intention of becoming Mrs. Jail-bird, and held it great pity that when solo places were so necessarily linked with the organist's in bonds of harmony, there should be no eligible opportunity for strengthening the same into the closer union of matrimony. And Duck Jones, who arranged for sacred worship such lovely popular songs, so suited to Miss Fairweather's tremolo style, could be had given the empty place.

Even Lornhamah Fillibrun, who despised Duck Jones, and was nothing but second soprano, without salary, still listened to her mother, who said that by all accounts Paradise choir was getting terribly mixed, and hadn't she better give it up and join the opera society?

Louis loved his work. He believed that music is the purest expression of passion—the pure idea, unclothed by a carnal body of words, but having its spiritual body—tone. Religious enthusiasm has always placed it among the occurrences of eternity. For this reason: it is as impalpable as the soul to which it appeals, the only unmixed spirit-pleasure we have—not a matter of intellectual act—altogether removed from any fleshly sensation—if ever an echo of earth, like the nymph disembodied. I speak of true music, not the wicked pandering to sensual emotion of which it is too often made the slave. It can, then, express every condition and experience of worship. Louis labored from that idea.

Neither Antoinette Fairweather nor Lavinia Green saw into his theory. Their common faces wore a curious expression, such as one's might bear on being compelled to suspend delightful conversation to listen

to a maniac, while he explained, and they struck flat and made retards in enthusiastic passages, and wouldn't speak their words plain, and said that they'd been able to give satisfaction to Paradise Church before he came, and they wouldn't change for no one !

Miss Fairweather brought her cousin to see her home Saturday nights—a stubby man, who drummed on the benches during practice, and innocently shied popcorn at the organist's salient points. And Lavinia Green, who had no cousin, said that she considered a horsecar quite as good as some company—an opinion to which Louis took no exception.

But he meant to keep his position, and the Reverend Geoffrey Smythe hoped he would. This pastor preached from love of the work—being a man of independent fortune—and he combined his penchant for the ministry with nearly as strong a passion for art and architecture, having, indeed, built both his church and a kind of Chicago Kenilworthian castle for his own use. Such a man (he played the flute) could not be insensible to the difference in his present services, supplemented by music—one soul the life of both—from past days, when a sermon on the Prodigal Son was sandwiched with the airs of three new drinking songs, and the congregation played out of church, after a discourse on the Crucifixion, to a few staves of "Genevieve." He was, therefore, slow to awake to the important relation of organ to solo places, as held by Fairweather and Green. But when the whole quartette resigned, engaged by the rival church sailing toward Zion under the title of the Holy Speculators, and that within three weeks of Easter, and the chorus became disaffected, he was suddenly brought to a sense of the situation. Yearly auction of seats drew on apace—the music a failure ! He bethought him

how it is expedient that one suffer for many, *i. e.*, the Easter service. He told Louis so that night, when he called to obtain the subject of Sunday's sermons, as was his custom. It had got to be the saying that the Mongrels infused a "dramatic" air into their services, and young people were prone to frequent them on that account. Certain it was that the minister and organist planned a united onslaught every Saturday evening; and if the sermon demanded tears, it was Mr. Allwood's idea that he should wring them out; and, if joy was the order of the day, the music was jubilant as Haydn, Lamballote and Mercadante could afford.

Louis, warned of the difficulty by the church committee, was not astonished when Mr. Geoffrey Smythe broached his little "leading of Scripture." He had been trying to decide his best plan of action on the way thither, for that choirship was life or death with him. He had not expected his pastor to be quite so selfishly oblivious of his neighbor; but then he didn't blame him. "It was," he said to himself, "a hard case." Still, his own dignity was worth consideration. "Have I ever failed in performance of duty?" was his quiet, matter-of-fact demand.

Mr. Geoffrey Smythe watched him standing so slight and graceful before the table, his cheeks full of bright flickering color, his pleading hazel eyes raised to his like a lad's to his master's, and his heart smote him— "He's nothing but a boy at best," thought he.

But the boy's sequence of questions was out of the character.

"Do you think that the quartette are fulfilling their obligations?"

"No," said Mr. Geoffrey Smythe, a second time truthful, and losing by it.

"There has been a good deal said about setting a

premium on dishonesty," said Louis, paling, but holding his ground; "What do you call this?" He launched his last hope on the justice of his cause—which the questioned could not help recognizing—and stood waiting his answer. Two terrible minutes elapsed before it came. Louis had not found his manhood—his rights as a human being—admitted elsewhere; if the servant of God denied them there was no longer any chance. He thought of what Charley said of the Geoffrey Smythe on the door-plate. His heart sank.

But the rector was, meanwhile, holding out his fair, white fingers with a true, good smile—a little wholesome shame lurking behind it, withal. He could deny his name, but not his principle.

"I am all wrong," said he, "I'll own, and straighten myself as fast as I can. Here's my pledge. If my help is worth anything to you it's yours."

Louis said afterward that that first honest hand clasp, that frank acknowledgment of equality, came like Heaven's franchise. He had many a time felt that he would die for one such touch from unstained rectitude—now it was his.

"I can never thank you sufficiently," said he—how little the words carried his emotion. "You give me strength for anything."

His delicate, boyish face transfigured with hope, set in that background of carved black walnut wainscoting and crimson raw silk, called the ministerial study, made a picture in the pastor's memory well worth the sacrifice of Easter music; though Mr. Geoffrey Smythe was a connoisseur in Rembrandts and Van Dycks, and owned a Joshua Reynolds worth no small sum. He had once journeyed to England for its sole sake.

"I don't in the least know how I can arrange for the choir," said Louis, calmly, now he was back in business, "but I will make it come out right."

As he emerged from the parsonage he met Charley, who swung him upon his shoulder and ran with him half a block to calm himself. "And hast thou slain the Jabbowak? Thou hast! Thou hast! my beamish boy! Kelew! Kelay!" Down came Louis, up went Charley's sealskin. Then this energetic young man jumped two fences, and thus assuaged his feelings.

"Aramis," said he, weightily, a moment later, "I, in the character of Parthos, have an idea."

"I will not be named Aramis," exclaimed Louis. "Ever since I've played that organ you haven't thought of calling me anything else. I detest the character."

"I wish you were half as smart," said Charley, disconsolately. "It's, Oh, for a howl in one vast hornets' nest, to-night—Aramis, now, would give them his blessing, and come out successful. For Heaven's sake don't warp!"

There was something in the air with which the chums were received at choir rehearsal that suggested the wisdom of Charley's prediction. Only a few singers returned their salutation, the others averted their eyes, and stood in exclusive groups, squaring their shoulders, metaphorical and otherwise. But Louis was strong to bear to-night—he had the fellowship of a true man to sustain him.

Since his advent, the choir had always held rehearsal in the church parlors. He preferred the piano for drill, on account of its clear accentuation, and the young people liked the increased social possibility. The chorus was large and aristocratic; Charley being second bass, and sitting opposite Miss Filli-

brun, who was particularly patrician on the strength of a direct descent from the maker of Miles Standish's dinner pot. The idea, of which Charley boasted, existed in a curious connection between this young lady and a package of French fruit in his overcoat pocket. Who is insensible to French fruit? especially when offered by Absalom, of whom it is written that he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

They had not been seated long at work, when Charley tossed into the young girl's lap a note, twisted around an apricot. "May I see you home?"

Now, Miss Loayme, as her friends called her, had often fixed her marvelous grey eyes on her fascinating vis-a-vis, and desired his nearer acquaintance. So she nodded a smiling yes, and ate her bon-bon sedately. And she paid far less attention to the "Children, pray this love to cherish," Louis had in hand, than to Mr. Pelican magnificently dealing out candy among the basses, and coming out profoundly in the "Walk ye, walk, ye hundred thousand," that closed the selection. Finally, at close of rehearsal, Charley abandoned his unfortunate friend with a triumphant wave of sealskin cap, and disappeared with Miss Lornhamah hanging modestly on his arm.

Meantime, the first quartette, who were plebeian, and belonged in a separate clique, really excelled themselves. Miss Fairweather's cousin whistled the Mocking Bird softly, while the Gloria was in progress, and Miss Green, between smiles at this pleasantry and eating figs, was quite unable to sustain her part. Miss Fairweather herself did fancy work, and exhibited a general incapacity truly wonderful; and there was much nudging of elbows, and leers and whispers filled out the pauses.

They were studying Buck's anthem "There is a

river." It was disfigured by their usual slovenly rendering. The pianissimo passages were accompanied by an animated drum solo, performed with Miss Green's fan on the register by the stubby cousin. The second crescendo was so strikingly out of tune, that it could not be passed by. Louis tried it over once or twice patiently. "Do you notice that you flat in change of harmony, Miss Fairweather?" said he, in his most inoffensive manner. He felt really sorry to be obliged to criticise, especially in such a delicate matter as singing in tune.

"No, I don't!" said she, with incomparable effrontery, raising her eyes boldly to his crimsoned face.

"This is the leading note," he struck it once or twice on the piano. "It leads into the new scale. You must feel the enharmonic difference between one scale and another, when you have a passage like that! Now, once more!"

The result, a change for the worse. Miss Green smiles triumphant, and the attention of the chorus fixes on the issue.

"It isn't right," said Louis, politely. "Suppose we take it alone. Will you be kind enough to give me your attention."

She tossed her head, and opened her book with insolent nonchalance; a deftly-aimed pop-corn hit the organist in the face. An audible titter resulted among the chorus. Louis hesitated. "Jerusalem the Golden!" sighed Charley, "I hope he won't warp." Unconsciously, he spoke aloud, and Lornhamah Fillibrun, who had been watching him, heard and smiled softly and intelligently to herself.

"The fact is, Miss Fairweather," continued Louis, looking at her mildly, "you have a habit of making a sound something like tic, and then sliding into your

note. That is what makes your falsity to key so obvious. Now, unless there's a tie note there, why make it?"

The lady felt this unendurable. She closed her book with a bang. "When I rehearse, I choose to do it with some one beside a convict," she said.

The chorus held their breath, and caught each other's eyes for intelligence. It was touch and go with them. "It's a disgrace to obey you," she added. "We believe you are a thief."

Louis had, in all his days of freedom, known a haunting dread of this moment. He had foreseen it as he sat alone copying law papers ; as he practiced on his organ ; as he threaded the bustling streets. It was not fear of the shame, but fear that when he must stand still dishonored, under the blaze of human eyes, his mind, twice pushed to the boundaries of insanity, would give way. There were chambers in his memory that he had never once dared to unlock. The fact was disease of itself. Now the hour was come. He suddenly felt himself free of his long torment. He rose calm and strong, self-consciousness flung to the winds, and stood looking down at his mutinous choir over the apex of the grand piano. So fair a mien, so open and true a face, should have been its own testimony.

"I am a convict, and I have no intention of concealing it," said he. "I will show, if I live, that there may be manhood in an ex-prisoner. I am not going to say that I suffered unjustly. You have no proof. What you have proof of is what I am among you. Look at me. Do I seem a rogue?" He waited a moment, daring their scrutiny. In the intense silence in which he was obeyed they half realized the horror of his long probation. "You shrink from the sentenced

thief. You do right. What I was, was loathsome, but I fling it behind me. I am no more the convict. I assert the rights of my manhood, which is *mine*. Let those men and women who will stand by a man because he is a man, stay ; you others, go!"

"I know his innocence, and I'm for him." Charley Pelican sprang to his friend's side, breathing defiance.

"He may be a thief for all that," muttered Miss Fairweather, obstinately.

"You lie!" Surprised at the loud retort, every one looked up. A tall, brown man, with long, coarse, black locks and piercing black eyes, had entered so quietly that he started forth among them like an apparition. He was dressed in the extreme of fashion, and wore a red silk handkerchief about his neck, and a huge gold watch-chain at his waist. "I am on the point of leaving for a year's foreign travel," said he, grandly ; "but before I went, as I heard you were roughing it on this young man in this gospel shop,"—the stranger laid a diamond-ringed forefinger on Louis' shoulder—"I've come to speak the truth, and square up an old debt with him. He was sent to Top Town for a burglary that two men did. One of 'em is dead, and won't suffer by my peaching on him, and the other was myself. He never knew nothing about it nor nothing else irreg'lar. Perhaps you mayn't believe me ? Will those who doubt my veracity be kind enough to look for their money ?"

"Stolen, by gracious !" exclaimed the men, starting to their feet.

"Exactly. It all lies on the piano." Knox held up his head with a smile of gratified vanity. Then, as he restored a dozen pocketbooks, which were eagerly examined and slid into their usual receptacles, in dazed astonishment—"Hereafter when you tell your

children about the master thief and the shifty lad who could steal the parson from the pulpit and the eggs from under the bird, you can say you've seen him—Tom Knox, who unites the three branches of hereditary kleptomaniac, professional pickpocket and master burglar." He took off his hat, and made them a low bow as he spoke, then walked toward the door. "I'll arrest you," cried Charley, dashing savagely upon him, followed by the others, with a common impulse. But the young athlete was tripped sprawling on the floor by a trick of arm and foot he'd never seen in a gymnasium, and, before any one could touch him, Knox, prepared for the attack, had jumped through the window, and disappeared in a whir of wheels. Certainly he had produced all the sensation he coveted, but it may be doubted if this act of reparation would have done its object much good, if fortune had not re-enforced it.

The men dashed headlong in ineffectual pursuit of their flown prey, and broke up the meeting. Misses Fairweather and Green disappeared, to return no more.

But Charley Pelican joyfully escorted Lornhamah Fillibrun homeward.

"Don't you think Mr. Allwood ought to be sustained?" said he ardently, the moment they were outside the door.

Louis' appeal had won him the sympathy of all the dozen men in his choir; they believed in him at last. But women care more for Mrs. Grundy than humanity in society questions, and accordingly Miss Fillibrun elevated her pretty nose, and answered she wasn't sure, her mother said people must always expect trouble when they didn't keep their place.

"In God's name, what *is* his place?" said Charley,

so vehemently that the lady stood still, afraid, and dropped his arm. "I mean it," repeated he, picking up her little hand, and gently replacing it in its sturdy shelter. "Vice will not have him, for he is not of it. He cannot consort with artisans, for they kick him out. Aristocratic piety seems about as benevolent as hard-fisted labor. What is his place? Must he die?"

It chanced that Miss Fillibrun had just read *Hedged In*, and was thinking about it.

"It seems as if he ought to have a right somewhere," said she, thoughtfully. "Those women were very ill-bred to-night, and he certainly is a gentleman; but then this association with a convict—it makes me shudder."

"I'd die to help him," cried Charley, hotly. "He and his have saved me from a far worse situation than this. He is the best—the *very best* man I ever knew—my one faithful, man friend."

Miss Fillibrun looked as if she thought a chance for truth obtained in reversed rendition. But Absalom could never help charming. It was his inheritance. In America women know a mere nothing of their masculine acquaintance as regards their true character. "Is he as he seems?" is the great problem, at least once in their lives. But a man's opinion is ground for authority, especially Absalom's. Miss Fillibrun suddenly resolved not to leave the choir, at least not immediately. It would be quite safe about the walking home now, Mr. Pelican would take care of her—for something in her heart whispered that such would be the case. She only *said* she would accept her escort's word for the organist's honor, and remain over Easter anyway.

Whereupon Charley, quite unconscious of the attendance in store for him, pressed some cherries

into the pretty fingers, so warm in their dainty Astracan muff, and lingered a delicious moment in the touch.

Being aroused, Miss Fillibrun talked on—earnest about the social problems that surrounded her—her Holly Tree Inn Society having one by one opened them all.

Perhaps Mollie would have smiled at the young lady's idea of doing good, which principally consisted in helping to pay the missionary's salary, and spending a pleasant afternoon every fortnight in hearing her recount her experiences to a perfumed and beautifully-dressed crowd of "patrons." It wasn't sham benevolence. On the contrary, it resembled in all points the joy of the angels over "one sinner." I wonder if the heavenly host didn't at times congratulate themselves on not being obliged, in duty, to assume Christ's peculiar line of tactics.

How close all true outspeakings lie to each other! Somehow the conversation turned upon individual progress and struggle, and Charley, who was much more intent on Louis' reputation than his own, flung reserve to the winds, and told, as fast as he could speak, exactly how he had undone Louis in Top Town, and what Mollie's return of salvation had been, and what his friend's forgiveness. He didn't realize his own miserable side of the picture in the glow of resolve to clear his friend's character;—wherein he succeeded so well, that Miss Fillibrun, with dilated eye and tremulous voice, promised to help all she could.

The vails of distrust, conventionality, egoism, that sunder us commonly, were here torn aside for the instant, and, in the warmth of a mutual sympathy, these two saw each other's inner life at its best—walked in as through an open door.

When Lornhamah sat down in her own third-story

front bed-room to collect her thoughts that night, for the first time in her earnest, struggling girl-life, contact with a masculine nature seemed not to be a diversion from God. She forgot to consult Tennyson's *St. Agnes*, thus far her ideal. She didn't even remember her. This handsome, black-eyed stranger who had sinned and repented so much, who was so faithful a friend, who had attained to the presidency of the "Prayer, Benevolent and Billiard Association," comprising the nicest young men in town, and giving lovely receptions, which she attended in lavender silk ; this man, who filled her mind with delightful thoughts which couldn't be wrong, since he was trying so hard to be good himself—what joy to be able to help ! Yes, she would certainly pray for him—which she did.

And Charley forgot the remaining candy in his pocket, with which he had intended to round the interview, and went home—the first half of the way in a glow of pleasure, at having accomplished a good act ; the last half in a fever of shame, when he recollected what Miss Fillibrun must think of him. He didn't reflect that what was so horribly real to himself, his memory, his bitter self-accusations, could not enter into her experience. The dainty members of the Holly Tree Inn Society could not have put in her hand a plumb to sound his depths. She only knew, in a woman's delight at having the confidence of a fascinating man, that he was formerly not so good as now, and trusted her enough to tell her of it, which was pleasant. Time might come when her own emotions, quickened by fate, would unlock the meaning of his confessions, but such keys hung on the skein of futurity.

After a very uncomfortable night, conceive his state of mind, when, on Sunday morning, Lornhamah,

in a bonnet with a red flower, that reflected a glow in her wonderful gray eyes, and made her simply lovely, smiled on him from the soprano's seat, a look so unconscious of its own subtile meaning and outspoken pleasure in him, that it was fairly angelic. It propounded a new question to his awakened mind. Were all women Mollies? or was *this* beautiful saint her double, by some strange, Heaven-sent, unfathomable sisterhood?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE KINGFISHERS.

“The cock did crow, to whit, to whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold.”



ND now, amid all this trouble, Peace Pelican went back to Top Town, bearing her own sorrow as best she might. She read and reread certain verses, which had been left on her desk in her absence, by an unknown hand. Their frequent perusal was intruded upon by Mr. Baker, who came in with fresh-coiled snake lock, rubbing his moist hands and professing deepest interest in her studies. As he one day inclined his obese person over her shoulder, she brought back a vicious elbow with force enough to click his smirking jaws together, and blazed forth a request for his immediate absence from her domain. He obeyed. But his spite, which he feared to display openly, vented itself in a thousand petty annoyances. Her favorite scholars were one by one transferred to other grades, and their

place supplied by examples of vice, stupidity or disease. The steam heat was found insufficient for cold days, stifling in warm ; her desk was tampered with ; her general exercises were forced upon her at the most inopportune times. And, worst of all, the principal paid daily visits of examination to her classes ; and after browbeating the poor infants till they didn't know *a* from *izzard*, would exclaim, with angry glances at the teacher : " You block sitting on a block ! you clam ! you oyster ! you squash ! anybody's scholar ought to know that !"

It took many a stormy meditation before those hateful gauntlets, now crossed conspicuously as chimney ornaments over Peace's mantelpiece, to keep the tormented girl to her task. But she set her teeth and went on steadily.

THE KINGFISHERS.

See here our floating nest, and here our callow brood !
While o'er my young I rest Ceyx flies the sea for food.
On waves of dimpling green we rock among the reeds,
Floating in sunny sheen where Zephyr midst them pleads.
Twice seven days brood I, and all that season blest
The Gods Alcyone fold safely in their rest.
Days fill with tranquil cares, and centuries slip by,
Forth Ceyx for fishing fares—still loves Alcyone.
And sweet is it to feel young heads press 'gainst my breast,
And sweet when Ceyx the leal comes speeding from his
quest.
'Twas fair when, a mortal maid, across our flowered cham-
paign
I watched the saffron fade at eve o'er the wrinkled main,
But to cleave with strong, free wings swift through the
dizzy sky,
While the air behind me sings, is keener ecstasy,
And it's brave to dart and poise the opal flood above,—
Scattering its drops to rise with the gift of Neptune's love !

My young sleep 'neath still wings; but my thoughts fly back
afar,
Past the waters purpling to the pale old Evening Star.
Ceyx was his hero son, who'd sail the stormy sea,
And all he dared or won was for Alcyone.
Could I my life re-mould, in the day my hero died,
I'd seek a temple cold, and widowed there abide,
But Ceyx Tartarus grim should tread as mortals must,
In Lethe's current dim, cleanse from life's carking dust.
So in the common fate his own heroic blood
Should pulse to action freight with hero masterhood;
And he, 'mid the immortal gods, should conquer him his
seat,
And life, in rich full floods, should surge about his feet.
Far happier would I be, in death, to mourn Ceyx cold,
Than float this beryl sea, and watch his soul grow old,
Grow small in paltry care, to petty use abased.—
'Twas all my life to share, that brought his life to waste.
This is our callow brood, here is our floating nest,
And Ceyx is stout and good, my young sleep 'neath my
breast,
But far rather I'd die once more, than float this idle sea,
Could Ceyx be the hero of yore, unbound by Alcyone.

Peace thought she knew the handwriting to be
Francis Haythorne's! And if so, the poem might
mean anything or nothing!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ROAD OF ENTEPFUHL.

"There's nae room for twa."



E must retrace our steps a few weeks to find Mollie leaning dizzily against the wall, where Tom Knox had left her. As she stood helpless, too dazed to move, Amos came by, whistling in an undertone.

"Why, Miss Mollie!" he cried, stopping as he recognized her, "how came you in this place at this time?"

His voice brought her back to action. She went to meet him, as he stood on the wet sidewalk waiting her reply. She was trembling with cold, and still unnerved by her vigil, and just managed to answer, "Christie Malone is dead; I've been watching with him."

"And *I* have just come from Hughey Dennis's," said Amos, gravely; "his feet were crushed under the elevator at the shop, last night, and I am afraid he will die. Mrs. Dennis asked me to find you, and bring you to see him."

A sharp shriek from the room below startled them both, and Amos rushed down the steps, to hurry back agitated and breathless. "A man hurt," said he, "stabbed; but they've got him off safely. There come the police—a crowd will gather about in a moment. Take my arm, and we'll hurry to Doppy's, where you can rest."

He half dragged her through the street, till he

reached the gate of the Solomon Rodgers, and then gently led her up the little walk, edged on either side with flower-beds, to the house—mantled with a grape-vine that covered its weather-beaten front, and stifled the mournful creak of the old sign in its close embrace. Even the February drizzle above, and the mud and slush below, couldn't drive away the home look filling the spot.

Doppy, sweeping her steps, and tidying up before she went away to her type-setting (she had worked at the trade two years now) recognized the figures approaching through the fog, with difficulty.

“I've brought you Miss Mollie,” said Amos, drawing a long breath. “You must give her some tea, Doppy; I thought she was going to faint a piece back.”

“Come in! come in!” cried Doppy, gayly, drawing them into the parlor, and bestowing a farewell knock with her broom against the side of the threshold, to get the water out. “An’ is it you, Amos?—lead the way, please—an’ Miss Mollie, too, this early! Who’d think it? How’s Hughey?”

“He’s bad,” said Amos, laying his cap on the table, and pushing the thick, dark hair from his forehead with a tired gesture. “I’ve been with him all night, and it’s taken my strength off to see him suffer so. I can’t get used to it, somehow, though the poor fellow’s as patient as a lamb.”

“An’ so’s Miss Mollie,” said Doppy, busily divesting her of her hat and wraps. “She don’t need to tell she’s been up all night, too. But you’ll not have time to go home and dress and eat, and get to your work at seven. Eh, lad! you must bide here. I’ve got steak I bought since yesterday, so it’s no throuble. I’ll fetch you a pillow, and you can rest on the settle

while I cook it; and if Miss Mollie don't mind, my room is in order—she can go there."

So the watcher laid herself on the white bed in the tiny place she had helped to fit up little by little, among the fresh, dainty pretties she had aided the young girl to earn and value. *Now* the room was become an asylum to her. Perhaps the remembrance that its beauty had grown out of her loving care, quieted her in the tumultuous throng of conflicting emotions, helped her to recover from the strains that had come upon her in so many directions in the last few hours. She had for years been embodying God, for Doppie, in teachings and mementos of beauty, now it was her own Lord who was waiting in His home—a pure maiden's room is His home. She came face to face with Him there, all incarnate in loving memory, and He comforted her.

Half an hour later, Doppie's bright self looked in at the door, and that damsel announced breakfast as ready, and brought her pitcher full of water, and a cake of perfumed soap, a bottle of cologne and a couple of snowy towels, for her guest.

"Please let me help you," said she. "Do you mind, this is exactly as you treated me that time long since, when the freshet was up, and you took me to the Covert! I'll never forget it to the longest day I live; it was such a nice visit, and you made me so happy."

Doppie was purring around her friend, brushing her dress, aiding her twist the hair that had been so elaborately plaited the night before for the wedding-party. How far behind she had left that experience in her eight hours' march!

It is affection turning about and relying upon their strength that makes some natures strong. Mollie in

her whole life had never rested in moments of weakness upon a human support. She had never had any opportunity. God was the only witness of her battles, and her idea of growing able to bear was to sob herself quiet with her arms about a cushion, a cat, a Bible, any unreasoning thing that could be made for the instant to fill out her need of tenderness, and then, having mastered herself a little, to go forth and take some piteous human sorrow to her heart, and so hold a real Lord pillow'd there. She could never make tangible to herself any side of God's character except his motherhood.

It was this instinct, strong as life, that soothed her now, for all the people that she loved stood to her in some sort as her children. It was not the least of her pain that the hope of full, absolute maternal experience grew more and more intangible. Do you remember Marion Earle, where she says :

“ You make me sob until I fret the child.
It isn't wholesome for these pleasure plats
To be so early watered with our brine,
And so I've kept forever in his sight
A sort of smile, to please him.”

This was how Mollie came to laugh even gayly at the breakfast-table, set out with clean white cloth and napkins, and smooth-washed, pretty dishes, all the little Irish maid's best store, brought forth first for dear Miss Mollie, but not the less joyfully because Amos Daley broke bread beneath her roof.

Mollie grew stronger as she noted the quiet, courteous friendship subsisting between the lad and lassie, so perfect as to be unthought of by either ; the politenesses of the table habitual to both, and their comfort and rest in each other, felt, but not comprehended, and

brought out strongly by this sudden calamity of their old mate. Time had turned a very different pattern from that the Workman first saw, when he framed together these plebeian earth-tints and patrician purples in the kaleidoscope of conscious relationship.

The change was apparent in the physique and faces of the two. The years that had begun to tell on Mollie's freshness—taken her clean out of dainty girlhood, and set her among the ranks of suffering, earnest women—had knit awkward Amos's loose-hung limbs into compact strength, and given him that grace that belongs to power, skillfully and habitually exerted ; had marked his face with resolve and thought, and a beauty that a conscientious life never fails to give. And Doppy had rounded from a gaunt, wild-eyed waif, into womanhood, piquant, impulsive and true.

Sitting with Mollie at the same table you might have noticed an unconscious, indefinable similarity in all three, not exactly in gesture or words, though long personal intercourse had given somewhat of Mollie's manner and form of expression to the twain, but a kinship of principle worked out into life, that brought them upon a common platform of sympathy—and in what but sympathy are we truly relatives of any ?

And all the bitterness of their childhood was become a heritage of contentment and mutual love, and in this matter their parents' bequest had been truly unlimited.

Even the quietest of refreshings must come to an end. It is worthy of note that Bunyan never permitted his pilgrims to stay above a day or two with their hospitable entertainers before he launched them into terrible woe. As my old minister used to say, "People do not live atop the mount of Transfiguration, they

only catch sight of the glory before the battle approaches."

Accordingly the twenty-minute whistle sounded when Amos was half through his second cup of tea, and the trio separated to their posts of duty. "Oh, dear! I'm sorry we've got to go," said he, pushing back his chair, and wiping his mustache—for Mr. Daley had such an ornament—and, despite Doppy's comparing it to a brush fence, she was proud of its silky curl. "May I walk up with you, Doppy? Good-bye, Miss Mollie. I'm afraid Hughey's booked for the other side, but you can tell when you see him."

"Just wait half a jiffy, Amos, till I put Chawemup out and feed Hennypenny," cried Doppy, giving the blue ribbon that bound her brown braids a fresh tie before the glass, for Doppy eschewed curls when at work. She hurriedly extracted the pet speckle from her favorite nook in a drawer in the dresser, and banished the whole menagerie, including a small black and tan dog, into the woodshed for the morning. "It's always been a problem equal to differential calculus to me why they didn't banquet on each other's bones, but such catastrophe never occurred."

"I suppose you know Swalleremdown died of old age and the new disease last summer?" said she, as they stood on the steps a moment preparatory to parting. "Oh, you haven't heard! Mrs. Heffron told the city missionary that's what ailed her husband when he was sick of delirium tremens. Menengitis she meant. There's pussy's monument in the window. I couldn't bear to leave it in the wet ground all winter. Amos carved it, with name, date and all. Give my love to Mrs. Dennis. Now, Amos—Amos—stop! I thought you wanted to walk with me, and to go off so!"

"I must hasten, Doppy ; it's late. Unless you want me to take a mechanic's lien on the sunny side of the street corner the rest of the winter. There's where most of the men that worked in our shop are."

She made a flying run to overtake him, as he held the gate open for her, and Mollie watched them lovingly till they turned the corner—two pretty children, both good and happy. Then she went across the road and knocked for admission to a small brown dwelling whose doors gave entrance directly from the pavement. Mrs. Dennis answered the call, with her apron at her eyes, and exclaimed, "So it's you, Miss Mollie. I'm glad to see you! An' ye come direct Amos told ye. Jest walk straight to Hugh. Sure, his eyes is crooked looking for ye."

The house was perfectly neat, and furnished with some attempt at elegance ; not at all the place Mollie had been turned out of in time past by its zealous mistress. How a few years will alter things ! The rag-carpet, for instance, put down with swelling pride four seasons since. Mollie's fingers always turned purple, in imagination, when she saw it—the forty pounds of rags she cut and contributed had snipped so vividly into her memory.

She shook hands with Hugh, cheerily. Poor fellow ! He was having a hard time, it was easy to see. He lay on a bed, improvised for the exigency, in the sitting-room. His eyes were shut from the staring light, and blue-lidded from long-continued suffering, and his lips, kept forcibly closed, worked with nervousness and sharp twinges of pain. He called up a faint smile for his visitor. "I'm glad you're here," said he. "Perhaps you can keep the people quiet."

"How do you feel?" asked she, sitting down beside him and lifting the youngest of the family to her lap.

"Amos said you never groaned once while the doctor was setting your ankles, though your mother wouldn't hear to your taking chloroform."

"No," said he ; "I couldn't, you see. Mother stood by, and I didn't want to let her know it hurt me."

No martyr's last oration could be more sublime than that simple reply. At least Mollie thought so. "But what did the surgeon say?"

"I've had two," answered Hughey, with another wan smile. "The first said, 'Cut 'em off—that's five dollars ;' and I told him I'd rather not ; so he left, and I got Dr. Jenkens."

"You'll have a good chance to lie and count the window panes," suggested Mollie, recalling the prime occupation of her sick bed.

"Sure, I've too many pains in meself to think of the window," denied Hugh, in a forlorn tone.

At this moment Dr. Jenkens' buggy appeared, and Mrs. Dennis, who had been indulging in a secret weep behind the head of the bed, had recourse again to her apron, and went to let him in.

"You here, Mollie?" cried he. "Well, well, the Virgin Mary'll take a back seat when you get to Heaven. Your son's in a raging fever, Mrs. Dennis. What has been going on since I left him ? Something. Now, what is it ? Company ?"

"No, indeed," she protested, sobbing bitterly. "Bad luck to them that did it. No one was here at all but me, an' Mary Ellen Heffron, an' my sister's husband, an' his sister an' her husband, an' my own brother's child, an' a few small b'ys. We was all lookin' at him, an' lamentin' wid each other at his misfortunes, when Amos Daley came to take charge. An' he put 'em clean out, even me, his own mother. An' Pat, he's hot tempered, he jest pounded a bit on

the door to let him know he wan't cowed, whin Mr. Amos boots 'em intire, as you might say, from the very house, leavin' me weepin' without wan friend to help. Sure, niver since the day when my own husband died, have I seen such sorrer. He had two buckles on his lungs, an' the doctor recommends drafts to his feet, an' I could only follow his advice. I hove the bare legs of him to the window, an' opened that an' the hall beyant. Och, hone ! he'd not ben there above an hour whin he thickened in his throat and departed, saints rest his soul."

"Your son has every symptom of brain fever," said Dr. Jenkens, severely. "If you want to lose him, have another scene. Mr. Daley did exactly right. I met him in the street and told him to empty the house. I saw the dismissed physician," he added, in a low tone to Mollie. "I asked him why he gave up the case. 'Oh,' said he, 'they're Irish.' I sympathize."

"You think he'll die?"

"Yes, I suppose so. He wouldn't, if he had half a chance. His physique is splendid, and his courage hasn't a flaw. I never saw finer. But his mother'll finish him. The fracture is very severe, and he'll be raving before the day's out."

"Then I'll stay here," said Mollie. "The society he belongs to will take turns at night."

"That's good," said the medical man, with clearing face. "I know their nursing. It's faithful and tender. I've seen them before. And the Silver Lake Goddess is still a member—keeps her pledge, I hear. Call and tell me how he is, on your way home."

But when Mollie came, as she was bid, she brought no good news. Mrs. Dennis had wailed all day, and that evening the watchers, after coaxing and comforting their best, finally led her up-stairs and locked her

in. Her son grew worse from the fret ; the fever all through his system prevented any healthy healing of the limbs ; then mortification began, amputation was resorted to, but his strength was exhausted by constant excitement, and he sank rapidly. Mollie was with him a good deal, and Amos and Doppo came once or twice and brought him flowers. He held them in his hand till they withered, and then put them the other side his pillows, where they could not be seen, with a sigh.

He talked to Mollie about his life; how he gained his first ideas of getting on; how the temperance society helped him. One day he repeated to her the whole tale of the *Three Little Fishes*.

“I never believed you much those times,” said he, thoughtfully; “but I remembered the stories. We fellows have all tried hard to be infidels; most workmen in Millville are. We never took stock much in Christianity; but we knew you told the truth if you understood it; and you never tried to teach any creed. We’ve most of us got a holt of something that kept us along. But there was a motto, black letters on a white ground, that hung by the hymn roll: ‘Prepare to meet thy God’ now death is coming ; tell me, what is there to believe ? What do you believe ?”

The desire to give advice is sure a sign of inexperience. People do not seek counsel in joy. Those who have won experience by pain, both dread to bare the scars of old wounds and doubt their ability to shield others where they have failed to protect themselves. Time was when Mollie would joyfully have addressed her soul to the task of proselyting to her own form of Christianity; but now she shrank from the idea with horror. Had she any forms to give better than those familiar to his boyhood ? Could her dia-

embodied faith satisfy him, accustomed to find his whole Christian ideal symbolized ?

“ I believe in the Lord and Giver of Life,” said she; “ so does your mother. The Church of God is one in all its branches.”

“ But you aren’t a Catholic,” persisted Hugh. “ If that Church is as good as any other, why did they leave ?”

“ They didn’t go out from the temple of God,” said Mollie, “ they moved into another room. We have none of us the whole truth here. One creed is as good as another to die in. You will stand side by side with Him who is better than creed, in a few days, and you will be like Him, for you will see Him as He is.”

“ Miss Mollie,” said Hugh, “ I don’t think any one but God forgives sins ; but when I used to go to confession as a boy, I’d come away from the altar perfectly happy ; I’ve never been so happy since.”

Mollie sighed. She, too, remembered her first communion, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding. She, too, had fought battles, and seen her transfigurations, and she knew that it wasn’t the necessity of salvation, only a bow of promise after a rain; an evidence of justification, but not every just man’s. Wrestled for for its own sake, she didn’t believe it would come.

He heard her sigh, and guessed its cause. “ I’d like to seek it in the old way,” said he; “ would you send to Father O’Gorman ?”

“ I’ll go for him.”

So the man of God came, and Hugh confessed and fasted, and received the Elements and Extreme Unc-
tion. When it was all over Mollie sat by him sorrow-
ful, for he was failing very quickly. She was watching
his wasted features with longing in her face. She knew

it made no real difference in the end, whether he went away in darkness or light; but she wished with her whole heart that she could help him, and she could find no word.

By and by Hugh opened his eyes. "It wasn't the real thing," said he, faintly, "not the same I remember. I don't believe in it any more, and perhaps that's why it don't hold God for me now."

"Hugh," said Mollie, earnestly, "your own body won't hold you to-morrow, but your true 'I am' will be somewhere."

"Yes," said he, "but this was all about the Son of God, and when I lost the saints and the Virgin, He went too. It wasn't God; He is what I am afraid of. I don't believe nor disbelieve that Christ was His son; but if I am going to heaven I must be His son, too; —not a worthless worm, as they say. How do I know I'm any relation o' His'n?"

"Did you ever love any one so much that you'd rather suffer than have him suffer?" said Mollie, diving into her own memory with a shudder. She was astonished at the flaming, conscious blush that covered the face death had already faded to ash, and exclaimed hastily: "Don't answer; I have no right to surprise your secret. Take it home with you to God."

"I'm not ashamed to tell it," said Hugh, simply. "Doppy nor Amos don't know I love her. It's ben hopeless pain to me many a year, but I see right away she loved Amos, and I've took the time he gave her in clog dancin' an whistlin'. I should ha' ben steadier if I hadn't gone so unrested inside, but it's kept me sorry for folks."

"Then I *can* tell you," answered Mollie, a great sense of kinship bringing her soul close to his. "That is the way God knows you are His son. I've found

out that God's heart aches like yours for every body. He loves, and their hearts begin to hurt so, for somebody else, when they grow to be His relations. That's what makes them His relations, and, when they learn this, they love Him, and He and their sorrow together help them to grow otherwise fit to live with Him."

"How did *you* find it out?" asked Hugh, eagerly.

Another bitter draught of memory. Then Mollie made reply, "God is love, and when I learned what love is, the rest was plain."

"Then you've suffered too," said the dying man, and the comradeship gave him strength. "Do you believe we *are* relations?"

"Yes."

"You said once in Sabbath-school, that God leads his children by the hand. Has he got hold of yours, now?"

"Yes."

"Then hold mine."

All was silence till Mrs. Dennis, fairly wept quiet, brought him a lighted taper. "Take it, Hughey," said she, in a choked voice. "It's to guide ye through the darkness."

He held it a few minutes in his right hand, while his left still clasped Mollie's; but it trembled sorely in his weakening grasp, and his mother, seeing the flicker, dashed away her tears. "Let me have it, my son," cried she, bravely. "Death can't put it out."

"Yes, take it, mother darlint," said Hugh, answering her love with a last smile. "God has lighted me another candle, just a piece beyant, but yours shines bright."

He lay watching the yellow flame with his death-dimmed eyes, his poor mother holding the taper

painfully still, and turning one side, that he might not see her grief.

By and by, Mollie went over to her, and put her arm gently about her waist. "Dear Mrs. Dennis," said she, "let me set it away. He isn't looking at *your* candle now, but *God's*."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WAKE.

"Sir Tabby Too Light told Miss Blanche All But White
A tale that near killed her with laughter,
Said she, 'O dear me, I'm spilling my tea,'
And all the cats joined in the laughter."



O Hugh died, and two days after he was buried. His friends held a wake, in which Amos and Doppy officiated, a very modest, sorrowful affair. The spirit of the departing found few but grieving guests at his last levee.

Mrs. Dennis never stirred from her place by the foot of the coffin, where she mourned her dead. She told Mollie that she felt a "real pain" catching her "here," putting her hand to her breast, "and when I weeps," said she, "I gets over it, till it comes again."

Through the day, and late into the night, Hugh's friends were entering and departing, and Mrs. Heffron and a knot of old cronies kept his mother company in the room, whose only light was three tall candles at the coffin head, and whose stillness was unbroken, save by the low sobs of the mourners.

At twelve o'clock Doppy helped Mary Ellen Hefron pass lemonade, crackers and cheese in the sitting-room, where the young folks were gathered ; grief had made by-gones of the old grudges.

Aleck was prominent among the assembly, and several times proposed to play a few games. But this, Amos, as the poor boy's nearest friend, refused to permit. The numbers gradually thinned; only a few who had agreed to keep up the custom and watch the night out maintained their places, and, in chairs tipped against the wall, vainly attempted to hold slumber at arms' length.

Amos had left for a few minutes to attend Doppy home, and Aleck took instant advantage of his absence to procure a dish of lard and a handful of soot from the kitchen. His sister, whose pretty blonde ringlets had caused Doppy such bitter woe, was fast asleep, with her head resting upon the bureau, her curling lashes sweeping her fair cheeks, and right across the room, Peter Hennessey, a stalwart young blacksmith, the most bashful man present, had nodded himself into oblivion. A few deft touches, and the faces of the sleepers bore a crooky intimation of their fate. Then a blow from a flat stick of wood applied to master Peter's sole, temptingly elevated, and a shake do-nated the young girl by her loving brother, brought them to a consciousness of their ludicrous situation.

Mary Ellen saw M. E. H. printed on Mr. Hennessey's astonished visage, quite unconscious that the mirthful Aleck had put P-E-T-E in vivid black on her own.

The loud laughter of the crowd, good-naturedly "soled" by Master Heffron, increased the confusion of the wretched maid, but the impulsive gallantry of his nation extricated Mr. Hennessey from his difficulties.

"Miss Mary Ellen," said he, advancing sturdily to where she sat, biting her lips to keep back tears of mortification, "it was intirely from compassion Mr. Aleck has got the thrick on us. He knew how bashful I am, and that it was my heart's wish to see ye home, an' nothing short of a crooked face would have brought yer beauty down so I dared ask it." With which characteristic speech the pair withdrew, and the salt drops on Miss Heffron's cheeks were dried in triumph, for Peter Hennessey was as nice a fellow as Syllabub could boast, or Roaring River either, to my mind.

Mollie carried a quantity of flowers the day they were making ready for the funeral, but she found the society badge and a yellow rosebud already placed in the hands of the dead. Some loving thought had brought them there. That was enough—they should remain.

There was a long procession of carriages to the grave. Mollie had not been to the wake, but she waited for the services at the church. In due time Amos and five other young men brought in the coffin, and set it down on the trestles before the altar-railing. Father O'Gorman entered, not in the best stole, but the one nearly worn, that did duty on poor occasions, adjusting his robes as he came, with all speed, and standing between coffin and altar, read the Latin service.

"What's his name?" said he, coming to a dead pause.

"Hugh Dennis, sir," answered Amos, rising partly from his knees.

"Hugo," interpolated the father, without stopping to lift his eyes, and not quite a minute after he had closed the book, executed a stiff bend to the Host, and

disappeared. The sexton extinguished and hurried away the candles with equal celerity, and the coffin was carried in silence from the church, followed by the mourners.

It was well toward the end of March when he died, and the grass was green with an early spring where they buried him. The procession broke up at the turnstile and cemetery gate, and all hurried toward the grave.

As the coffin was lowered, some one set up a dismal cry which presently settled into a kind of chant:

“Oh, Hughey! To see you lyin’ here dead and cold.
Och hone! what shall I do.
Ye that was the light of my eyes—all that I had in the
world—
Oh, Hughey, och hone! what shall I do.
My tears are like the rain; but your eyes are dry, Death
has closed them.
Och hone! What shall I do—Oh! oh! oh!”

By this time the women and boys were sobbing aloud; and every few minutes the keener raised again her sorrowful cry, until she grew faint with pain, and dropped heavily to the ground. Some of those who had brought her son thither, now lifted and bore her back to the carriage—for the poor singer was his mother.

Then Amos threw the last shovel full of earth upon the mound; they laid back the turf, and the cross and wreath over all, and Mr. Daley lifted his cap from his head, and knelt; every one followed, and when they rose, after a moment’s silent prayer for the soul even then answering at the judgment, the service was over.

That night, while Doppy was stirring her fire, for

the March storms were come upon the land, and while she watched the flame curling up and about the drift-wood, a smile caught her lips, and made dimples in her cheeks, far too sweet to waste on the crackling hearth. It was Amos she saw in her thoughts. Amos, so manly and strong, and able to command among the bearers, and in the ordering of the house of sorrow. She was waiting his coming now ; for she knew, with a strangely sweet prescience, that he would come to share his man's grief with her ; and it was the consciousness of her love for him, that could share his grief, which filled her face with such light.

She still stood before the stove, fingering her white scalloped apron, and watching the wheel of light from the open draft, when, without knock or preface, a figure entered with a miserable torn shawl over its head, followed closely by a child, so lean that it scarcely seemed more than a skeleton.

“ Do you know me, Doppy ?” said the woman, dropping her muffler. “ You oughter—yer changed much as me.”

Know her ! Doppy couldn’t forget the playmate of half her lifetime, even so miserable as now.

She made haste to bring her own rocking-chair, gay with its scarlet moreen cushions and tassels, and set it by the fire.

“ Rest you there, Joe,” said she. “ Have you come back to stay ? Give me your wet things ; and the boy—”

One couldn’t tell by its rags huddled on what sex the manikin should claim ; but its mother settled the point: “ It’s nothing but a girl,” was her bitter correction; “ no such luck for me as any better.”

“ Where have you been ?” asked Doppy, watching the little wretch with painful fascination, and receiv-

ing for her glance another of such pure hate as made her shudder, it brought back her own childhood so horribly.

"Sit down, ye tormint," said the mother, lifting a threatening hand, before which the goblin shrank away, instinctively. "I've ben hanging hereabouts this month an' more. I come along the week he died."

Doppy didn't need to ask who "he" was. She had grown far on beyond the days when Joe's fate was sealed ; but her intense pity for her friend had grown too.

"Poor Joe," said she, gently. "Are you hungry ? I've meat and bread."

"Not me, the child may be, likely. I had a sup of whisky beyant."

Doppy rose and heaped a plate with food for the waif, and then watched it claw it up and stuff it into its ravenous mouth, till she was sick with disgust, the more piquant for memory.

"Joe," said she, attempting to break the spell, "is she bright like other children?"

"I dunno ; 'bout same's Christie, I reckon. He was sorter dumb allus. I hain't had no time to teach her nothin'. 'Twan't no use. Settin' on cold sidewalk beggin' fifteen hour out o' twenty-four, and drinkin' between, one don't get no good out o' one's young ones, an' I'm so ugly most days I knock her round considerable, too. Times I pities her."

"Poor thing," said Doppy, with heartfelt compassion, and tried to draw the changeling to her lap and caress her. But it repelled her gentle touch defiantly, and ran to crouch in a corner.

"It minds me o' Miss McCross's tea party," said its mother, with a spiteful laugh. "You didn't know

manners much better then yerself. I s'pose she's ben the savin' o' you. Pity she didn't take no interest in me. P'raps then I might ha' got clean an' happy, too." Her eyes followed the circumference of the pretty room ; the plants in the windows ; the fresh-papered wall, hung with pictures and knickknacks ; the spotless floor, and ruffled curtains, with their scarlet tassels ; the braided cover of the dresser, with its array of flowered china and shining tin ; all telling the clean, pure life of their mistress, as inanimate things must always speak. Something of hate crept into her look —the class hate of the vagrant toward the rich, for Doppy had crossed the line, in Joe's thought, and was separated from her wide as worlds asunder. Between them and you, you know, is a great gulf fixed.

"She did," cried Doppy, eagerly : beginning to sew the gay rags she was preparing for a carpet. "There was no difference between us, but you wouldn't stay where she put you at all, at all. Even your father couldn't command you."

"He never was no father to me," cried Joe, passionately. "If he had ben, I shouldn't be myself. That's just the way. Every one keeps talking of my lost honor as if I'd ever any honor to lose. There's only you out of the round dozen girls we went with but is as bad as I."

"I know it," owned Doppy, sorrowfully. "I don't say but it's so. God knows all about it. It's a wonder I'm not the same. I was in the way to be that day when we found the picture about the white robes. Ye gave it me. Do ye mind, Josey ? I have it now."

Doppy went to the dresser, and brought the card back to where Joe sat cowering over the fire. "See, it's the same Pilgring," said she.

The woman smothered a sob. "Yes ; I don't for-

get it, Doppy," she answered. "It was that time by this token that me an' Christie made friends along o' his mother's beatin' us both. All this," here she laughed again recklessly, "for five minutes' comfort on a cellar-door."

Doppy didn't reply. She was trying to disentangle the recollected threads of her wretched visitor's feeling, if there was one whereby to save her.

"Do you remember the 'sylum?" went on Joe, presently.

"Yes," said Doppy. "I never could see why you didn't stay. Warn't they kind?"

"Kind enough," quoth Joe; "but do ye suppose one livin' allus in the street, wid liberty to foller my will, 'ud stay there wid rules an' quietness, 'n' never a sup o' whisky or a dance at all, at all, 'n' me the best at the clogs on the corners? No, no. I couldn't live that life. I'd see hunger, an' cold, an' wickedness, an' beatin' afore; but I was free. As fur bein' any but what I am, childer reared in the street they can't come out good; 'tain't in 'em. You're nice 'n' warm here. I must be goin'." She rose and dragged the shawl about her head wearily.

"Joe," said Doppy, pushing her work away, and leaning forward in her earnestness, "don't part. There's your empty room above. I'll share my purse with you till you get a start. Stay. Try again. You can have washing or mill-work. Quit whisky. Be happy."

The woman stared. "You make me laugh!" cried she. "You don't know the nonsense you're talkin'. Me give up drink? I'll tell you, Doppy, if you put a cup of whisky on the floor yonder, and death between, I'd go for't. No! I've settled my mind to beg a little money, then I'll turn back to the city to-morrow 'n'

make a finish. Christie 'n' me oughtn't niver to have ben born ; but seein' we was, life ain't scarce a whole one between us." She was moving as she spoke, toward the door, but Doppy set herself before it.

"No, you shall not, Joe. Bide here. You had will enough once, let it save you now."

The girl hesitated—not that she hoped ; but the warm heart of her old friend, brought close to her own, softened her, and the cheerful, cozy room, too, made the street appear more desolate. Doppy seized her hand.

"Come back to the stove with me. Don't try the storm, it's bitter. To-morrow's time enough to give up."

A dawn of desire lit the sin-hardened face. "Well, then, to please you I'll try. But," with something of her old defiant impetuosity, "I must seek work to-night if at all; to-morrow I wouldn't neither have wish nor courage."

"Then take my hood 'n' shawl." She brought them and put them on the castaway, in a glow of hope. "Your child shouldn't go into the wet and cold. You're coming back, leave her with me."

The waif had followed its mother ; but she now turned on it with a snarl, and struck at it.

"Stay where ye be," cried she, "I didn't call ye," and Doppy drew it in, stolid, not human enough to shed a tear ; while Joe shut the door, and hurried swiftly up the street into Millville—happy, rich Millville, whose thousand lights caught on the raindrops and were reflected back and forth till the enwrapping fog seemed like a golden cloud.

Mrs. Hitchcock's gate came first. She knocked, was admitted to the warm, bright, sitting-room, where

the squire sat reading the paper, and his wife crocheted, and Adeliza lolled lazily on the sofa.

No one noticed her beyond a stare, but she sat down awkwardly on the first seat, and dead silence ensued.

She was thinking how to put her words so as to gain her petition—the very wish for virtue gave her a strange timidity—but she was spared the refusal.

“You had better move on,” said the elder lady ; “we don’t take in tramps. You can go to the Irish families below, they may give you what you want.” It would be hard to define the suspicion and hate of clamoring charity, religion, superstition, unwilling servitude, ignorance, and daring wit and impudence that would see through the selfishness and tawdry pride of upstart Yankee gentility comprehended in that word Irish.

“Ma,” said Adeliza, languidly—she was aged and uglier than in her youth ; but not altered, only confirmed ; “why argue ? Let the person leave.”

“Young woman,” interposed the squire, laying down an abstract of Dr. Perfect’s course, in the *Universe*, “don’t impose on good-nature by remaining. There’s a law against vagrants.”

“I’m not a vagrant,” cried Joe, setting her arms akimbo in the old defiant position—she never knew any other ruling mood—and tossing the head hardship had shorn of its girlish grace, but not of its haughty poise. “Thank the saints there be’s Irish, and well-to-do, askin’ no favors o’ Yankees, and rale ladies, that *have* took me in, an’ give me o’ their best, an’ I’ll niver forgit it.”

Hurt pride helped her to the door, which she sought unattended, and shut behind her in obedience to a command called out from the sitting-room.

She was trying to be respectable, but respectability would not admit her. The gulf yawned very wide. It wasn't the consciousness of guilt that shut her out from these people. They had sinned up to their temptations as easily and unrepentantly as she. Other women in Millville—rumor said Mrs. Hitchcock herself—had tripped in their time. How many men in the little city, with its thousand unfortunates, could boast sympathy with, even comprehension of, Galahad. Squire Hitchcock would undoubtedly have denominated the maiden knight Miss Nancy. No; it was the comfort saturating every item of their surroundings, in sharp contrast to her staring, bare-faced lack, that cowed her. It was their fullness and complete self-satisfaction that kept them from comprehending her want. Want cannot make advances to cross the gulf. Want is emptiness, vacuum. Can vacuum fill? Does ease care to diminish its store to fill it? Will it halve its mantle of luxury—let in a rent of craving pain to cover disgusting, ulcerous need? I trow not! Isn't it glad that there is a gulf? Doesn't it delight to insult God by declaring that the foundations of society are as firm as the everlasting hills? And when He overturns them, and the Commune takes upper hand, what then?

It was a craving, not a self-satisfied Jesus that comforted lepers and harlots; recognizing them kindred because of their craving.

Jœ was almost ready to give up. But next stood Dr. Perfect's. She remembered its calm dignity well. There dwelt the man who supplied the gospel shop. One more trial.

The pastor's wife opened the door—no fear of alarming by uncouth garb or gesture here. Mrs. Perfect's stiff black skirts were full of Christian grace,

possibly, but carnal angularity had their arrangement.

“What do you want?” said she, keeping hold of the door, and standing so the driving rain, just missing herself, came full on the tattered calico clothing of the suppliant.

“Work,” said Joe, concisely. Her teeth chattered so she couldn’t speak otherwise.

“You must be suffering. What is the matter? Tell me your troubles,” said the tract author, instantly remembering the inkstand, and closing the door to keep out the wind, so she was obliged to protrude her nose, chin and one eye for colloquial purposes. “Poor girl! what has brought you to this?”

“Nothin’!” answered the one shut out. “I might be better, I couldn’t be worse. Born so.” She wanted help, not talk. The ingrained defiance of nature and habit crept into her voice.

Mrs. Perfect was used to defiance, she met it frequently in her Christian work. She was sensitive to its first indication, but she only answered sorrowfully, “Oh, how terrible! poor thing! if you had told me your story, I didn’t know but I could help you, but I see I can’t. You’d better try somewhere else. Here’s five cents.”

“I don’t want money, I wants work,” said Joe, thinking to convince compassion, though she couldn’t help eying the coin—price of one glass of whisky—with longing.

“Oh,” said the benevolent, slipping it slickly back into her capacious pocket, “I make it a rule to get my help altogether from the Orthodox Religious Association of Top Town. I keep clear of Papists by that means, and have the pleasure of giving my support to none but Christian want. My washerwoman is a

colored convert from the South, she speaks every Wednesday here at the female prayer-meeting. I should like to have you hear her, she makes a very interesting address."

"Mebbe I might, if you'd help me to work," answered the starveling, with simple cunning.

But Mrs. Perfect wanted a new sensation, not the labor of a charity, and received the proposal as a disgusting temptation to simony. "You'd perhaps get it by application to the town authorities," said she, coldly. "You won't be likely to obtain situations so many honest girls are inquiring for all the time; why don't your priest help you? I wouldn't be trapezing the street at this hour; you'll get taken up for a night walker."

"My priest never stumbled at a dollar to help his people," cried Joe, indignation getting the better of want. "Many's the hungry that are fed at his hand. But I'll not stand in the way of them that's more desarvin, an' I take the name you give me, walking through the black night, away from your pious portico."

Mrs. Perfect, thereupon, was the gainer of material for a tract on "Popish Paupers' Plenishment of Purses out of Protestant Property."

And Joe strode wrathfully onward. So this was the result! She had pleaded in vain, had exposed her naked heart to be trampled upon. Her true self was then a hissing and reproach, for, thank God! our best self must always be our true self, since only what is good can be true. She was ashamed that she had incurred their scorn. "I won't keep to it," said she, as she left the shut portal, and set her face against the sleet, in which Mrs. Perfect's attempt at charity had kept her standing. But children are not hardened

into self-righteousness and self-contentment. Joe saw some children through a window, sitting with slates and lesson books about a table, with an astral lamp shaded by a bright figured screen. She would ask aid there once more. The oldest, a twelve years' boy, answered her knock, and brought her into the pleasant, disorderly room, among tops and balls and broken toys, and gay colored picture-books. Here mamma's work-basket, piled high with a diminutive flannel dress half made; there papa's magazine, with its decalcomanied leaf-cutter between its open leaves; and best of all, the little girls, whose round combs wouldn't stay in their curly hair, and whose busy slate-pencils were in a chronic state of stubbornness in the conflict between arithmetic and the eager, stolen excitement of "tit-tat-too—I beat you."

But the lank form, and hard, desperate face of the intruder, with its sunken, muddy black eyes, and hair hanging from beneath her hood in ragged elf locks, sitting there so still and silent, eying them so hungrily, awakened their terror.

They one by one slipped out to "mother" and detailed their fears. Through the door, left open in their fright, Joe heard them telling their story, heard the answering ejaculation—"What if she should be a burglar's spy, your father away, and the baby alone with her! Run back quick, my son, and see she don't take anything."

Joe was a thief, she had never been trained to anything else. But she hadn't thought of stealing there, with her heart soft toward the children, and the innocent baby, so different from her own goblin offspring, she hadn't even been reminded of their common brotherhood of infancy. But this chubby, unreasoning thing, even he would have none of her.

Finding himself tied in the jumper, where a minute before he had been springing and crowing and laughing, deserted by his brothers and sisters to the strange horror, he begins a piteous whimper. Any woman who has soothed her child, would try to still a sobbing infant from habit. But this babe, half frightened, half angry, threw up his dainty heels at her approach, and lustily howled out his dismay. Mamma rushes in, thinks the stranger has done something to him, clasps her darling, arms, head, neck, fat legs and all, in a promiscuous bundle to her breast, and demands of the cause of commotion what she wants.

“He’s frightened of me,” says Joe, sorrowfully, no pride of caste to sustain in a child’s rejection of her. “Hide his face, an’ p’raps he’ll quiet. I’se lookin’ for work.”

The tell-tale accent of the despised race! The mother’s heart, tender in task of stilling her little one, hardens. Suspicion has no mercy. “I have my kitchen supplied with servants”—(like any other utensil,) “I don’t need any more.”

It wasn’t a life like the others that refused her here. It was something she recognized as pure and true—beyond her—like Doppy—something she couldn’t understand, that made her darkness palpable; something she had never known, and saw now too late.

The mistress of the house didn’t wish to turn the intruder out, exactly, she only immersed herself in her babe, snuggling in her arm, playing Bo-peep, with mock fright at his former terror, strong in the safety of his mother’s presence.

Joe sat watching him a few minutes hopelessly, and then went slowly to the door. “I may’s well be goin’,”

said she, with a shadow of tears in her voice. "Thank you—Good-night."

And the woman, not comprehending, still looking in her baby's eyes, only gave a preoccupied good-night, and let her wander out again into the darkness, and rain, and despair.

"Three's as good as a dozen," said Joe, doggedly. "I might's well turn back 'n' tell Doppy 'taint no use."

Still she hated to disappoint Doppy, and the thought dragged her step; she went on slowly, contrasting her fate with her playmate's, till the future seemed intolerable. She felt no remorse; she had stumbled into things, but it was because they were there to stumble into. The one chance of childish innocence was gone; life was exhausted of possibility; she had tried to escape, but it was plain now there was no way, and nothing left seemed worth while. Nothing had seemed worth while since Christie went to Top Town. He was dead too! Some people who have got to the end of their rope have to hold on to take care of their possessions; she owned nothing but the goblin and their rags. Alas! the poor abused one, that was like the incarnate nightmare of her girlhood's sin and misery. It was not capable of exciting love, only apathetic pity, at best, such as she felt toward it now. Some people at the end of their rope want to hold on a little longer, because the futureless present has enough in it to make it pay about as well as to let go. If Mrs. Perfect had given her the five cents, her present might have held something—a few minutes drunken-comfort—now it was empty. She was coming through the chilling black rain to the railroad crossing. It had a magnetic indicator that was even then trembling with the approaching danger. Joe stopped and listened to it. Joyful people can afford to be oblivious of the

world. Miserable people can't ; any outside sensation is better than their own.

While she stood there, one of her feet pushed deep into the clay mud, and held her ragged shoe fast imbedded in its ooze. She heard the warning tinkle, and then the sharp locomotive bell piercing through the distance. Never mind, worn and old as the gaiter was, she wouldn't soon get another. Beggars mustn't expect to replace tatters so easily. She stooped to extricate it, standing in the street close by the rails. But it was dark. She could hardly find it. The engine light glared bright. Oh, there it was ! stuck close by the rapid torrent that the rain made of the gutter. She gave a hasty pull. It came with a jerk. She slipped in the clay, and fell forward over the track with a faint cry. Her knee was hurt ; the place was lonely, there was no one to offer help. She put her hand to the bruise and rubbed it slowly. Why hurry ? that left so much more time to contrive to fill up. All the while the bell rang nearer, and the mighty light swept forward yellower and fiercer in the blackness. It was close upon her, this bright, confusing light. If she tried she could scramble off yet. The bells rang quick and hasty, and the hoarse whistle like a curse assaulted her to drive her away. Yes, yes, she would go. She half rose to get one side. Her wounded knee gave a spasm of pain. Why take this pain to obey ? Let them sound iron whistles at her—she'd been screeched at and ordered out of sight before. Millville had done it all her life—all this evening when she tried for a chance. She'd a right to sit in the open air if she pleased. No, to get up wasn't worth her trouble.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WHEEL OF IXION.

“Johnny Dory had a turnip,
And it grew behind the barn,
It grew, and it grew, and it grew,
Till it could grow no farther.”



REALLY didn't intend to say so much about Johanna Haverty's fate. It fascinated me into the telling, but I apologize. When I put that jolly bit of Mother Goose at the head of a former chapter, I meant to speak of weddings, and jewels from Tiffany's, and other such objects of delight as Sir Tabby and Miss Blanche enjoy. It is true, you may find sketches of modern crime and wretchedness, with poetical curls, and large mournful eyes (Joe had large eyes) and a few artistic rags, and a dilapidated basket containing a study of still life for distinguishing mark—at Goupil's and Everett's and Hazelton's, and the Academy of Design; side by side with old-fashioned, golden-haired Magdalens, not much dressed, in cases; and Persian, Egyptian and Circassian females, with such expressions on their high-colored features, as by long survey thereof, would set most of us at Hell's door. Sir Tabby and Miss Blanche often go there and look at them together. The air is balmy and perfumed, the light soft, the garb of the frequenters as faultlessly beautiful as the costumes on the surrounding canvas. Perhaps Miss Blanche doesn't understand about it. It would be better for them both if

Sir Tabby did not—but then, this isn't the same at all as Joe's troubles ; it don't interest you in Joe, who tells a lie and begs ten cents, not five paces from the outside door. On which account I am going to let my distich stand. It is not artistic, I admit. It may shock your taste. I hope so. I'm glad to have you wholesomely shocked at something. If you'd cared for Joe in the first place, she wouldn't have come to her death at all ; if you'd done anything except say, " Oh ! ah !" when I told you about her seven years and more ago, she might have been good and happy. Aye, good and cultivated enough to whisper to you at the picture gallery, " Excuse me, but I wouldn't gaze so long at the Cleopatra, there's a gentleman watching you," as I heard a lady do the other day. Joe had quite a talent for putting beggar's marks in red chalk on fences. Perchance she might even have risen to the penciling of Faustinas, and Fornarinas, and Aholibas, with sweet extracts of Swinburne under them, and, in severe virtue, helped shudder at disgusting vice with the best of you " You can't most always sometimes tell."

"But she's dead and defunct, without any doubt,
The lamp of her life's intirely gone out."

And we must not suffer her to detain us any longer. Bury her in the Potter's Field, Squire Hitchcock. Should it happen to be near Christie, well and good. If, dealing with the stranger and the fatherless, we deal with Him who is our salvation from such fate, it's a very fit place to put her. His blood purchased at least one such inclosure, and—say no more about it if you'll be so kind, I pay my proportion of the town tax for paupers cheerfully. There are a

couple of thousand more just such people in Millville. "She's only a drop in the bucket." Don't look disgusted, Otho Groenveldt, all you want is to keep your aristocratic patent leathers clear, and you know it. Besides, I am going to the wedding.

Whose wedding?

Well, several—Mary Ellen Heffron's for one. Father O'Gorman published the bans of marriage for the second time, last Sunday. As Peter said, on the way out, "Three times round is enough." Of course Peter Hennessey's the man. Poor things. They've planned to live in the new hundred-and-thirty-family Bee Hive, Starbird and Pedlow have just put up near Goncusset street. Strange, people will provide for the increase of crime in this way. Nobody knows where little Clove Starbird has gone, either."

What do I mean? I'd like to ask how women are going to grow up modest and virtuous where ten families do their house-work on two pairs of stairs, and about as much privacy is possible as you'd find in a chicken-coop?"

No; I'm afraid Mr. Hennessey, handsome as he is, and loyal, and honest-hearted, and his pretty, silly wife, will only roll the same wheel that their parents tried to back before them, and be crushed thereby in the same recoil. Meddling, and slander, and jealousy, and distrust, and bickering, and waste, vice, and want will open the way for each other. The moral atmosphere of such a place is pestilence; which men can survive only with terrible struggle, but not women. No purity of intention can nestle where every little fault is solidified in an hundred memories, and concealment impossible. Only our lovers forgive. And how can we get above ourselves, *thus indelibly photographed upon selfishness and gossip?*

But Starbird and Pedlow are public benefactors ; the *Universe* says so. And real estate has actually gone up in the street, because they've put bell-pulls and gas-burners all over their speculation—thereby increasing its respectability. The only improvement common sense dare suggest, would have been draining the cellar, or raising the street. The green marsh water sometimes stood six inches deep on the basement floor, where they were building the walls, and people wonder about typhoid fever and cholera infantum, that thins out the Bees as clean as the Egyptians thinned out the male children of the Hebrews !

If a Jew kept an ox known to push with his horn, in barbaric ages, and the ox gored a man, ox and owner died together ; but civilization takes better care of owners of oxen. Mr. Pedlow wonders about the mortality in his erection as much as anybody in Millville.

No ; I don't feel like sweetly-smiling Sappho, friend public. I feel as if I lived in that very tenement block, with seven children, and had not time to watch them carefully, because I took in sewing. I wish ; yes, I *wish*, Otho Groenveldt, I could make you feel so, too.



CHAPTER XXV.

THERE'S NO LOVE LIKE MY AIN LOVE.

“Frog, he took her on his knee:
Dear Mistress Mouse, will you have me?”



OPPY sat waiting Joe's return, thoroughly anxious and wretched ; she pitied her unfortunate mate from the bottom of her heart ; but the bright hope with which she had sent her forth, faded every moment into dreamier foreboding. Doppy had entered the company of the saints, but had not forgotten their picture in perspective, acquired as a sinner. She was afraid they wouldn't want to help Joe ; and if they did, the object of their compassion had neither skill nor application. She wouldn't understand how, wouldn't *desire* to help herself in the best way. When people are come to such straits, it's always because they don't know how to help themselves, and so are set in their mistakes. Doppy began to realize what a millstone she had offered to lift. She couldn't tell whether Joe had grown so much worse, or herself hard-hearted and censorious ; but there was no longer any kinship between them, except her pitying love.

She went over to the canary's cage, the mysteriously-substituted singer, and taking him on her finger, tried to forget her fears in his tricks and dainty carols ; but there was the child, tumbling in grotesque animal comfort upon the warm floor—neglected of love, and so, absolutely without grace or winning charm. She *must* think. If there was difficulty com-

ing, this was the time to face it. Yes ; she was afraid of the cost. She put the bird back in the cage, with a lump of sugar to console him for the lost caresses, and sat down to reason it out.

What was the cost ?

Money—hard-earned money; time—precious time; but these were of small value in comparison with Joe. Love, yes, Doppy loved her ; though the atmosphere of vice she carried, her appearance, her very self, were disgusting. Doppy remembered her as she sat, rocking to and fro, by the stove, cursing her child. Could she mar with this the sweet, pure home she had obtained with such weary pain and struggle ? The thought brought a shudder ; but for faith's, loyalty's, Christ's sake it must be done.

It wasn't like Doppy to reason thus upon a deed of generosity. She was far more prone to act first and reflect second. But she bore a stainless name. She was, she knew with honest pride, the pattern of Syllabub. What would be her reputation, consorting with this miserable woman ? It had taken years of patient care and love to save herself ; Doppy recognized it now, as she had never done before. It would be at least as many before Joe could be reformed, if such reformation were possible ; meanwhile, what would Syllabub, rank with slander—what would Amos, say ?

Ah ! Amos was the root of the matter. Would it cost her Amos ? She began to see that *that* cost would be her life—if life be reckoned by its worth. Men didn't sympathize with outcasts. Amos had grown very contemptuous, terribly severe in his estimate of the voluntarily vicious, as he himself wrestled into virtue. She knew he was pure in heart and living as she. What would he say—what would he do ?—he, who had always shielded her from evil as carefully as might be.

mother—to whom she owed her safety, who consistently regarded her dignity above his own.

It was very bitter.

She was sitting with her chin in her palms, thinking so intently that she didn't notice his approach till his hand fell on the latch, and his dear, familiar face met her at the door—familiar in all expressions of tenderness and affectionate help. What look would it wear soon? She had forgotten how she smiled at the foolish fire but a half hour before, because she realized she held his treasure—recognized the cord that drew his life forever and forever into hers.

She regarded his features doubtfully. It was a relief to see the usual kindly look, a little softened by the week's pain, still there. She was so used to rest upon his strength, that, instinctively, her load lightened—instinctively, too, she appealed to his help.

"Oh, Amos," cried she, dragging him in, "I'm so miserable ; what shall I do ?"

"I don't know," he answered, sitting down on the settle, and bringing her beside him by the hand that had influenced his own progression ; "what would you like? Hullo ! What's that?" eying the child with startled dismay.

It had fallen asleep, ugly and uneasy, on the floor behind the stove, in Chaw'emup's place, leaving that offended dignitary, with restless tail and flattened ears, to sulk where the terrier belonged, who had, in turn, assaulted the pet hen, and taken forcible possession of the dresser drawer, where he wasn't comfortable, and kept peering over the edge, with eager little barks and dives at Biddy, waddling about disconsolate, deprived of the china egg, which had been the subject of

six months' incubation—only able, now, to brood upon her wrongs.

The picture they made was so absurd, and Amos looked so puzzled and secretly amused, that Doppy couldn't forbear a mournful smile. "It's just the way I feel myself," said she, "quite emptied out of my peace and quietness, and I don't know what I shall do, Amos, when it gets worse."

"Who is it you've got here?" with a glance of intense disfavor at the child. But he went over and picked it up, with the gentleness that can only belong to strength. It hung in his hands, limp with sleep, and he brought a cushion, spread his handkerchief over the top, carefully adjusted the baby's head at what he conceived the proper angle for ease, with a carpenter's eye for accuracy; and then returned to his seat near Doppy, who had been watching him, miserable and silent.

"It's Christie's," said he, with modest hesitation. "How came it here?"

"Joe left it," exclaimed Doppy, thinking only, "if he colors with shame at the innocent offspring, what will he do, when he sees the mother?"

"She's gone for work, and I don't believe she'll find it, and she wants to reform, and I've promised to help her, and I *will too*, and it's going to be dreadful. Oh, Amos!"

She couldn't keep from appealing to his protection. With him nothing would be hard. Without—she dared not measure the depths of *that* possibility.

I don't believe he realized it. He had elected Doppy to his heart long before, and never thought of dethroning her. She had allowed him to grow little by little into hers, and that night had made bare and near the agony it would be to tear him out. His

allegiance was a matter of will with him, but it was all *her* life.

She sat watching his face, her beautiful eyes full of piteous longing and dread. Some people are fine in quick comprehension of possibilities and choice of the right, some adhere to rectitude by force of good habit, honestly contested for, without definite decision at every act. That was the difference between Doppy and Amos. It didn't occur to his great, honest heart that he *could* fail the girl he loved, when she needed him.

"Ye sha'n't fret, Doppy," said he, gravely. "I won't go back on you ; what do you want me to do ?"

Oh, the joy and fullness of rest in a tenderness like this, that would wrap her in its perfection and uphold her above fall. It came like a revelation of God. It had been hers before, but not tried, certified by test of great necessity. It filled all her want, it made her humble and ashamed.

"It isn't anything to accomplish," said she. "I only wished to have you stand by me ; I think it was the slander that I frightened at." She was looking to him with perfect trust, and that radiantly sweet, comforted face children wear—smiling after tears.

"There's something I've got that would protect you," said he, with simple-minded loyalty that offers its choicest as matter of course, and dreads refusal most, because it, like a blow, puts all service outside of love. "It's my name and honor. I've earned 'em beside ye, darlin', will ye take 'em to keep ye safe now ?"

Take them ! The clamorous tears had their way ; she *could* not answer. He thought she was unwilling. He had longed for the rights he begged so many

years ! He was not fine enough for her, he knew it now ; it hurt him solely, but he put himself away.

“Don’t think I’d push ye, Doppy,” said he, gently. “If ye don’t wish, only say the word, but I’ll help ye none the less.”

She caught his hands in hers, till she could master her voice. “Amos ! Amos !” she cried, “I thought I loved you, but not like this—your love for me. I ain’t worthy you should love me so ; God forgive me, I never can be !”

He drew her face, so wet and swelled with weeping, down to his breast, and proudly strained her close with the arm in whose strength she was to rest forever.

It was their first caress—God filled it like a sacrament. Who can measure the joy of this first conscious rendition of soul to soul, to go hand in hand through eternity ?

But Joe never came back, and when, at eleven o’clock, Amos left Doppy to a long night of watching, its object had rejoined her one love in the unknown—was already beyond human care or sacrifice. Could she be beyond it ? Was this first gift of pure, unselfish, loving pain life had brought her lost ? Could she sink into eternal night with such a treasure reaching through the darkness after her, claiming her by its inalienable right for its own. “Ye are bought with a price.” What matter to the All-Pervading where the price was paid, or through whose human touch came the boon ? We are His body, and so hold His love and pain. Is this unavailing ? Does he suffer in vain ? in us, and outside us, too ? It cannot be. The revelation was made ; the twain, guilty, stained, wretched, had seen the human Christ ; and now, face to face with the Divine power, would—could he deny himself, and

say, I never knew you? Out upon the thought! God is the I Am—the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Somewhere he hides those wretched souls where kindlier clime shall give a better fruitage. Of what? of the one earth gift of Christ spirit, the one experience of Christ love, of simple-hearted purity, of their own craving want, only understood when at death's door, after the long journey through falsity and leprous vice, and horrible lack. He showed himself in human love, pity, compassion, grasped too late for earth, but, thank his unchanging love, not for eternity! It took all the knowledge of misery to make the joy apparent, it took all the experience of sin to make the purity seem worth desiring; it took all their first struggle and pain who forgave, and pitied, and loved, to recognize the other pain, and reach toward it with help; and all the pain was Christ's in his living human body; and Christ's personal, individual pain besides, in that *He*, Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary, son, too, of Jehovah, individually loves them all. And the germ of love, thus implanted in the experience of the twain, *must* grow of its own law into perfect love, which *is* perfection.

The morning had scarcely dawned when Doppy was summoned from the settle, where she had slumbered uneasily through her watch, to admit Mrs. Dennis. That good lady hurried into the room, dashing past the young girl, to the child lying still asleep in its cozy nook, with its head on Amos's pocket-handkerchief. The fire had been kept bright, lest Joe, coming home wet and cold, should need it. The rain was over now—fled, like the outcast's soul, whither none would follow, but the warmth of flame and love, kindling God's altar, burned on.

“Oh, poor babe!” cried Mrs. Dennis, snatching it

and straining it to her breast ; " poor thing ! fatherless an' motherless ! how yer heart will break wid sorrer when ye know what yer too young iver to find out, that yer poor mother's met wid death this night ; an' I crossing the railroad track to early Mass, found her body scattered into small bits, only they'd carried it beyant to the table outside the little market, an' laid it there, and left you all alone. Poor Joe ! she's had an awful time ; an' she was a bright gel, wid will an' beauty fur better. But she niver knowed better. I can't forgive mysel whin I thinks of her pickin' bones wid my own Hughey.—Saints rest him !—that I did no different by her. Puir thing ! puir thing !" She was rocking to and fro, all Irish impulse and grief, when Amos and Aleck Heffron entered together.

" I might have know'd ye'd be here," said Aleck. " She's told ye the news, Miss Doppy. It's truth." His handsome young face wore an expression of horror that frightened her. " It can't be, say it isn't so, Amos," she cried, turning to him for hope, or at least courage.

" It is the fact," said he, sadly. " Our charity came too late. When they stopped the train, there was scarce enough of her left to bury. We—I should have remembered my duty to her sooner. It's taken into God's hands now."

" The time come fur her ter dust, an' she did," said Aleck, uneasily. " We warn't to blame. We might have failed in our religious duty, but we performed our civil."

" No ; but yees needn't ha' gone back on her when she was alive," said Mrs. Dennis ; " and ye, Aleck Heffron, might lead a steadier life yerself, if it's nothin' but example. What's the difference between yer goin' to concert saloons, an' gettin' drunk, an' her doin' the

same? Savin' ye've the grace o' bein' a man, where do ye deserve more'n she? God pity her!" She looked sorrowfully at the child, and brought the tip of her tongue forcibly from the roof of her mouth with a series of heartfelt "clicks."

The babe, astonished to find itself the center of attraction, lay perfectly quiet in her spacious motherly lap, with a strange commingling of feature and expression that haunted its beholders with familiar memories.

"Its father and mother over again," said Aleck, still confused by Mrs. Dennis's sudden attack, which came from poor Hugh's mother, and their old friend, with honest weight. If she had cooked fewer frogs' hind legs for the trio, in by-gone years, he might have shaken it off, but now it was not possible. "I see Christie look jest so the night we met the ghost. I wish he was here, 'stead o' this brat."

The words jarred on Doppy, but perhaps they only gave additional charm to the thought with which she watched Amos blushingly recover his property from the improvised infant couch. It is very sweet to a maiden to find in her lover the awe and chivalrous courtesy which some man natures render to babyhood. It is fealty to her crown.

"No; we've Joe herself," said she. "Her face wore that very expression, last night, when she said she'd try."

"I don't make it out so," answered Amos; "it's the legacy they've both bequeathed us. It's the hard, bare years that we all spent together, and that in them developed to the full, but we left behind us —made alive to save for eternity. I'm not much of a theologian, but I've thought a great deal about it,"

looking shyly at Doppy, "since last night, and that's my idea."

"You're right, boy; and while I can earn, she sha'n't lack schooling and clothes," cried Doppy, heartily.

"I will go halves," said the newly-anointed prophet, with a certain happy realizing that he had a right to minister with her at one altar, in all things, even self-denial.

Doppy's eyes, bent modestly on the ground, while she strove to conceal the conscious smile that would own to their community of thought, and the look she stole at him, where he stood surveying their charge with the usual puzzled, masculine curiosity and interest in children, told their own story.

"An' so would my Hughey," cried his mother, weeping afresh. "Sure it's home an' care I'll give for his sake. I'm glad it's a girl—no other boy would be as dutiful as him. I'd be jealous to think one might fill his place. But she'll cling round me, an' be a comfort."

"You've all put in," said Aleck, soberly, "an' you're able; but forgettin' I've got more stock in her than any of yees, accordin' to Mother Dennis." He darted a glance at her that showed how her words rankled, as he spoke.

"It's thrue for ye," retorted she, composedly.

"Mebbe it is then." Aleck was too soft-hearted to be angry in this common sorrow. "I've danced away half my plumber's apprenticeship, and you're both journeymen, and have settled all your affairs. I'm glad you've Irish merit enough to look green—you can't deny it—but I don't grudge you your comfort, you'd neither of you have had it if it hadn't been for the other. Now, I'll tell you what—you will have enough to do to go to housekeeping together—and

you just leave me to be its godfather. I'll stop drink-ing, and every month put a couple of dollars in the bank fur her agin she needs 'em. What's her name?"

They looked at her and each other, blankly—no one knew.

"Let's call her 'Pity the fallen,' and give her a fresh start," suggested Aleck, hastily, seeing Dopp's discomfiture.

"Well, why not," answered Amos; "unless Mrs. Dennis objects."

"Godfathers have a right to name, I b'lieve," rejoined that good lady. "I don't want to give her my sainted boy's, and there's no more of her race but her, to say."

So it was settled, and we scarcely need add, that dialect soon brought the appellation into propriety as *Patty Fallon*, and she bears it honorably and well to this day.



CHAPTER XXVI.

SMILAX.

"Eleven he courts, and twelve he tarries."



RAY-EYES was right. The quartette were ill-bred. Partly for this cause, and partly for Charley's popularity, and partly be-cause Louis had won his footing, the chorus refused to countenance them, and stood by the Easter music nobly. Miss Fillibrun and her friend *Etta Karl*, who sang a very rich, sweet alto, consented

to take the solo places ; Charley and Louis filling the other parts as well as the seceders. They held rehearsals every night during the two weeks intervening, where Charley spoke much of the necessity of having a soprano and bass in one accord. And Lornhamah frequently broke off to look in his face with artless anxiety, and exclaim, "Oh, dear ! Mr. Pelican. Do you think we hug each other close enough ?" which was the phrase her snuffy old music-master was fond of using in relation to the various parts of a harmony.

The programme was unhackneyed, at least. They had "At Easter Morn the Lark ascending" for a beginning ; and Louis shyly produced two quartettes, exquisitely copied.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the dear Lord who loveth us,
He made and loved them all."

And the other :

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
The soul that riseth with 'us—our life's star—
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in utter nakedness,
Not in entire forgetfulness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

The first hymn was a plain quartette, marked with fresh, sweet melody, simplicity and finish. But the other was written with solos, duets and chorus, the harmony full of imagination and richness, the coun-

terpoint masterly, the solos a perfect expression of the idea they were set to. The full chorus coming in at "but trailing clouds of glory," was noble as the sentence deserved. The two were dear thoughts of the author, and notably the growth of experience.

When Mr. Geoffrey Smythe found he had a composer, and one of no mean order, in his church—a cosmopolitan like himself in taste, and capable of putting in practice his own wishes—his joy knew no bounds, and he labored early and late on his text, "Whatsoever things are lovely, pure, and of good report, think on these,"—introducing a criticism of Inigo Jones, a dissertation on Italian music, one on Joaquin Miller's poetry, and a tribute to Carl Ritter, before he finished the first ten pages.

I will say right here, ere I plunge into more worldly matters, that the service was a perfect success, and when, at close of morning devotions, the organ took up the dearly-loved strain, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," it followed the departing congregation, woven and interwoven with each secret heart-cry. Redeemer! From what? Ah! each soul knows in its own depths of agony and bitterness.

But this anticipates ; for though, doubtless, the hour of the Lord comes as a thief in the night, yet not the thief without preparation. Only a few days before the great event, Charley remembered the hot-houses full of smilax twining all the season for no less than a dozen rich brethren, and the funds accumulating in the treasury of the Mongrels, who boasted no poor to consume them. Then, with a commingled vision of callas, camellias, and trimming one long, delicious day with Lornhamah Fillibrun, he broached the subject to his pastor. Mr. Geoffrey Smythe subscribed a couple of hundred dollars on the spot, for

what was that to a hobby ! Moreover, he gave out the notice at Thursday evening prayer-meeting, and stipulated a font full of callas as his only wish in matters of decoration.

But though Saturday morning brought blossoms and greens plenty, not so workers. Truly, the sparrow hath found a nest for herself, even God's altars, but this does not apply to prison birds in the aristocratic palace of the Great King.

To depart from metaphor to fact, the quartette spent the first half of the day alone. There was much pasting of colored letters at the top of high ladders, and the floor was full of ropes and ropes of smilax, and papers and papers of pins, and hosts of tin crosses, and wreaths, and crowns, and daggers, and I. H. S.'s, to fill with flowers ; and ivy, and camellias, and dozens on dozens of azaleas and daphnes in pots to stand around the altar and chancel steps. Every one gave, because Charley took Mr. Geoffrey Smythe's horse and phaeton, and went about soliciting—and whoever heard of Absalom's persuasive accents going at a loss ? But nobody, as I have said, cared to come ; and Lornhamah, whose big-eyed, thoughtful beauty found a kinship in the dim, awesome church, wandered up and down, her heart swelling with strange delightful sensations, and Mr. Pelican—well, Mr. Pelican wandered after her.

Wonderful, memorable Saturday ! How the little courtesies of labor, which makes comrades, will fire trains of love in young hearts ! There be times when a handed chair, a lifted basket, a ladder steadied for timid feet, a nail superintended by two dilating, fearful, admiring eyes, as driven just within utmost stretch of possibility ; in short, any deeds of deftness, grace,

or proud endeavor, have in them alike madness and inspiration.

As their work progressed, how beautiful it all was ! How the stained sunshine fell in rays and masses of color aslant the aisles, and caught and hung tenderly on the ropes of green netting between the arches, every coil of verdure rising from a hanging flower-vase full of blossoms ; and there were the crosses and letters, and hosts of sacred symbols crowding the walls of the chancel, and burying desk and altar with their fragrant wealth ; and the steps of the chancel planned to be a mat of flowers, and the heap of lilies rising golden and white from the font, and Lornhamah drinking it all in in present fulfillment and ideal promise, innocent and lovely as any. A wreath of roses was to hang below the head of Christ, high up beneath its own tiny window of white light, almost level with the base of the Gothic arches that fretted the roof. Charley carefully ascended the tallest ladder, nails and hammer in hand, and Miss Fillibrun climbed the other and brought the adornment. She was a high-strung girl, full of courage, but the color ebbed and flowed in her cheeks, and her gray eyes, ribbed about the pupil with a wheel of black, opened wide and deep with excitement. She stood in her purple robe, a long ray of glory catching on her hair, and illuminating her slender figure ; clinging to the wall with one white hand, while with the other she tendered the blushing wreath, and Charley leaned forward to receive the precious charge. Not that other votary of St. Agnes was more maidenly fair before the colored window, of whom Keats wrote :

“ It threw warm gules on Madaline’s fair breast,
As she knelt down for heaven’s grace and boon ;
Rose bloom fell on her hands, together pressed,

And on her silver cross soft amethyst.
She seemed a splendid angel newly dressed,
Save wings, for heaven—Porphyro grew faint."

But Charley was not of Porphyro's mold. The ladders were close together, and why should those frightened depths of gray draw his soul into their black net-work? Why should her upturned face lift itself so fearlessly to meet his own? And why, ah, why, did he bend closer and closer? Ah! why, indeed?

No one ever knew. Not Etta Karl, innocently twisting wreaths below, afraid of ladders, and smiling to herself over a certain letter, written in a masculine hand, reposing at the bottom of her pocket. Not Louis, tacking up crosses to the familiar rhythm of all action, "On to Mollie! on to Mollie! all for Mollie!" Not Mrs. Fillibrun, who couldn't read the new, glad light shining from her daughter's heart upon her innocent, young face. But Mollie heard it all, when Charley brought home Lornhamah Pelican, of whom the old superstition did not err in saying, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; he hath no need of spoil."

When Louis went home to dinner, Mrs. Parish inquired, with much interest, if any one had come to help, and how far the work had progressed. Oddly enough, she, too, was a higher life disciple; but belonging to the Methodist church, she had never descended to visit the Mongrel. She now observed that his fine acquaintance reminded her of a blackberry patch in the first of June. If he kept a boarding-house, he wouldn't have expected anything else.

But on the way to *her* repast, Miss Karl met some of her mates, who wanted to know if the handsome President of the Benevolent Prayer and Billiard Asso-

ciation was at work decorating. Now, it was a *very* dear friend who stood nearest, and so Miss Karl leaned forward, and whispered :

“ Yes ; isn’t he splendid ? And only think !”—this with rounded eyes—“ he told Loayme that he’d been fast once, and it was Mr. Allwood’s sweetheart who helped him to reform. That’s why he’s so kind to him. I really think he ought to be supported.”

And what charity couldn’t exact, this dainty bit of gossip accomplished.

It was a charming day, and everybody met everybody on the street. And by four o’clock, a bevy of young girls had, somehow, fluttered into the church, and settled down, like birds or butterflies, among the flowers. Then, too, Charley’s club of young men, and his fashionable boarding-house companions, dropped in, after bank and insurance hours, and work progressed merrily.

Charley, who was resolved that Louis should win the fight with prejudice, carried him about, arm-in-arm, and made a hero of him ; and every one caught the spirit, and asked his opinions with deference, and appealed to him here, and called him to come there. The ladies smiled their sweetest at his approach, the gentlemen clapped him on the shoulder, and he was modestly happy in the unlooked for change, and basked anew in the beauty, luxury and refinement from which he had been so long shut out.

Lornhamah didn’t think it half so nice as when Charley had had eyes for none but herself, and sat at her feet, clipping the threads that held the smilax, with her embroidery scissors, set at the joint with two turquoises. Still, she watched him in proud sense of possession, as he circulated about—the tallest, best-proportioned man in the room—expanding his mag-

nificent chest, conscious of his magnetic beauty and power. And, among so many, the trimming, which could never otherwise have been finished in time, grew in completeness, moment by moment.

But, great was her dainty amusement when a short, stiff figure, very like a jumping doll in jerky progression, hitched just inside the furthest door, and inquired, in a sharp nasal tone, raised to reach to the chancel, if they wanted any help—the same voice, in fact, in which Mrs. Parish would have issued orders to her maid below, from the top of the cellar stairs.

A well-bred smile crossed the countenances of the circle in the transept, and no one answered. But Louis, the center of a group of eager listeners, discoursing on the proper methods of trimming in harmony with the architecture of an edifice, by adapting the plan of ornament from the primary plant idea, from which the style of the building was originally developed, felt that his boarding-house was upon him. Indeed, the familiar, stale perfume of Mrs. Parish's pipe, wafted inward with a draft of cold air from the door, was proof indubitable.

He turned round to catch her eyes fixed on him with an eager, questioning, doubting, mortified expression, as she stood consciously ajar with this gay crowd of young fashionables, they so delicate and harmonious in voice, coloring and manner, chatting among the heaps of blossoms and wreaths to which they seemed akin—she, thus unwittingly intruding upon them, nothing but Wilhelmina Parish, boarding-house keeper to cheap clerks and mechanics.

Charley had barely time to exclaim, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson," with a grimace of half amusement, half chagrin; when Louis hurried forward

from his coterie of new-found supporters, took her basket and hat and muff, welcomed herself with a thoroughly sweet, grateful smile, and asked where she would like to work ; if he shouldn't introduce her to the pretty, gray-eyed young lady yonder, Miss Fillibrun, his first soprano.

She gave him a curious look, to see if he really meant it. "I don't believe I'm wanted," said she, proudly. "I had no idee there'd be any folks here, or I wouldn't have come a step ; I'll slip home."

"But it was kind in you, you ain't going away. Just follow me and see my friends," entreated Louis.

"Well," said she, "I'd *like* to see your friends, if you've got any."

So he gave her his arm, and brought her into the charmed circle, where she stood, stiff as a clothespin, with, as Charley said, "a twist to her mouth enough to frighten away smiles at a candy pull."

This was, we reiterate, Louis' hour of triumph ; when, for the first time, the refinement and elegance his artist sense loved, not only took him back to itself, but claimed him for its own, revolved round him as its center. Did he, for one little moment, think it hard that his personified years of famine and shame should thus intrude upon his blushing happiness ? It wasn't the rightful lord of all showing kindness, mind, it was the barely-recognized stranger, periling his reputation among the fastidious.

I don't believe he did. There was loyal respect, more than that, affection, in the air with which he leaned forward to say—"Miss Fillibrun, let me introduce you to my kind friend, Mrs. Parish—Miss Karl, Miss Van Auken, Miss De Peyster."

Lornhamah responded, her heartiness just tinged with amused sense of the ridiculous, and courteously

made a place beside herself in the group, all eyes and ears wide open to take in the grotesque wonder. But faint as was the demoiselle's smile, Mrs. Parish caught it, and her heart smote her for bringing Louis to such a position. Outraged pride flamed instantly. "Friend!" she cried, in her rasping voice; "I ain't no such thing. It's all his palaver. I'm his boarding-house keeper; and I heerd his *friends* was all goin' back on him, an' thought I'd come an' see. I've yet to find there was no occasion. I don't have no opinion of boarders generally; they're either knaves, or shiftless. But he ain't no knave, anyway, and I calculate to have an eye on him."

The smile broadened, and the tip of the poor woman's nose waxed redder and redder. But Louis had no idea of seeing her discomfited. "Why, Mrs. Parish," said he, taking her hand caressingly, "how ungenerous to deny me so! You know you're the truest friend I possess. You saved me from starving, and now you disown the object of your charity. It isn't right."

This was said with such quiet simplicity that the sneer died away, and when Louis possessed himself of the horrible blue ball, and sat by its owner winding smilax, and waiting on her with such delicate deference as of itself dignified its object, Mrs. Parish found her position among equals—at least in acceptance—and began to be happy.

But there was an extra touch coming to Easter decorations not put down in the exquisitely-tinted programmes scattered through the seats just before services.

It was a beautiful church. Mr. Geoffrey Smythe had partly modeled it after a very old one at Washington. It had a gallery that not only skirted the

lower part of the nave, but rounded the angle and followed both transepts up to their ends. Above, where they intersected the nave, the roof rose in a kind of hollow tower, which seemed to give a straight uplook to heaven. All the church windows but these were stained. The very organ (Johnson's best) was built in two parts, to save the Catherine-wheel beauty in front. But here the clear sunlight made the Marriage at Cana, frescoed beneath the out-looks of the tower, startlingly bright and beautiful. They tore it down, this dear gem of a church, to make room for a furniture shop, last year. I can never forgive it.

But on this particular evening Mr. Geoffrey Smythe's discourse was not calculated to interest boys, being largely about the conflict of the Renaissance with Christian symbolism, and a few dozen of these young savages had taken possession of the extreme corner of the right transept gallery. How dreadful are boys! They divide the world into two parts, shams and realities, and put you among the shams. They are always eying you, when you entertain the Honorable Thingummy, with such a disagreeable expression on their freckled faces, much as to say, "Sho! all French gilt and veneering." As for the realities, they are a vast field for experiment, and themselves ordained discoverers.

These boys in the gallery, as we say, cared nothing to hear the singing and the organ, and the sermon on art. They only wondered if the cords supporting the smilax would burn, and if so, how far down the pillar.

No matches; "never mind," whispers the one with the most freckles; "here's flint and steel, and a piece of punk; who's got some wood?" Half-a-dozen jack-knives clicking against their owners' legs at the bottom of their pockets were answer to the question, and sev-

eral sticks, stubby or otherwise, as temper last smiled upon the whittler, and marked their fate, were produced.

The boys all crouched in the corner, and with some ado, got their weapons well lighted. The flames instantly ran along the cotton string to where it began to hang down, and then stopped ; but the biggest pine stick fell from its owner's hand in the excitement, and lodged among the black-walnut carvings of the gallery facing, where it couldn't be hit ; and, lying too low to poke, set the wood blazing. Then they were frightened, and screamed "Fire" at the top of their voices.

The reverend architect's doors were not planned for a jam panic, inasmuch as they were high and narrow—only three at best—and the gallery stairs came down inside, there being no vestibule to speak of, for its place was supplied by a porch twenty feet wide, and running the whole width of the church. The night seemed suffocating in the sudden change from winter's cold ; the aisles were filled with chairs, occupied largely by ladies, and, among the tightly wedged mass of humanity, there was no way to extinguish the flames. Everything was right for wholesale murder.

Louis, from his place, saw that the only hope of saving the people was to quiet them. He whispered to Charley to see that there ensued no crush and tumble down stairs ; and himself dashed through the rose window upon the roof of the porch, and slid down the nearest pillar, ran round the building, through the pastor's study, and, entering the chancel, where Mr. Geoffrey Smythe stood transfixed with fear, and white as his robe, walked firmly to the front, commanding all to be seated and not to fear, for there was no real danger. He gained their attention by his cool self-possession ; then, since the fire at the extreme end of the

transept had not grown enough to be perceptible, except in smoke, he was obeyed.

The only dread was from a panic. Stone pillars supported the iron framework of the gallery, which, like the floor below, was paved with encaustic tiles. When the balustrade and facing were burnt off, there would be nothing but his dear organ to spoil—not even the iron seats, except the cushions, bought for hair, and flaming exactly like corn-husks.

Meantime, the young men of the club, by his order, for he instinctively took command, cleared the aisles of chairs, passing them hand over head, and those people within the endangered transept had been quietly gotten out by way of the pastor's study. The crowd were moving freely through the doors, and the galleries, under the management of Charley, aided by his friends, had been nearly emptied. Louis himself brought the ladders, used for the yesterday's decorating, planted them against the pillars, found the fire-buckets, carried off cushions that treacherously flamed up in his arms, and then left the work, in effect, finished, and hurried home to flour his blisters, and quiet Mrs. Parish, whom he had vainly sought in his labor of mercy. He had but done his duty. He had acted from mere impulse, and succeeded, he told himself, as much because life had too few charms to daze his head, as from inherent self-possession. He couldn't value his worth a jot higher. But the church people did ; and Mr. Hingman was glad to compliment him on the street. The young men sent him a testimonial; and the battle was won.

He cared enough about it all, however, to read the comments, in the city papers, to Mrs. Parish. He was ashamed in his heart of his pride—not in the act,—but that Top Town was overtopped by a few minutes'

quiet standing, five or ten feet from a handful of blazing fagots. He blushed as he read the laudatory phrases—that all perused, and none remembered.

“It isn’t the thing worth honor, after all,” said he. “Don’t let’s finish it. Except you and Charley, nobody’ll care. Here’s another piece of bravery—‘A Last Noble Act of a Dying Ruffian.’ We’ll take this.” He began to read an account of Tom Knox’s exit into another world. How, finding his sister endangered in the burning, he had entered through an upper window, and brought her safely out; but in the act of returning, had lost his footing on the slippery stone trimmings, fallen, and broken his neck.

The boarding-house keeper was sitting in her attitude of relaxation—elbows on knees—smoking. She turned her head away a little, while he went on with the article; and he had fairly reached its close before he noticed that her pipe lay dead in her lap, and she had covered her face with her handkerchief—two signs of emotion altogether without parallel.

“Dear Mrs. Parish,” exclaimed he, shocked, “tell me what ails you.” Then, coming close, and peeping around the flimsy barrier—“Crying; what can I do?”

“Nothing,” said she, in her old, dry tone, rising as she spoke. “Knox was my brother; that’s all.”

She left the room, bolt upright, her elbows clicking against her sides; and, half an hour later, served supper, as viciously acid and aggravating as ever.

But the place in her Bible where it says, thieves, liars, murderers, shall not enter the kingdom of heaven, was wet with tears; and Louis, passing by her favorite seat, found the parrot, forgotten in her grief, carousing among her cherished knitting-work, and knew how hard a life-load had been hers.

He slipped off and told Charley, whose face, smil-

ing with some new glory of hope, clouded in real sympathy. "She's a well-intentioned old dragon," said he, sadly. "I'd like to comfort her. I wonder did she often set at her departed scallawag as she did at me that night; I don't blame him for boggleing if she made a practice of it. It wouldn't take—think, to send her flowers to commiserate? I have it! It's tobacco! There's a good article sold here." He hastily disappeared, to bring back and press a package of odoriferous "Lone Jack" into his friend's hand. "Give it to her with my condolences," said he, feelingly. "Tell her I hope it will help console her troubles. Say she's to put it in her pipe and smoke it! Oh, dear! won't that do!" as Louis grew preternaturally grave. "Hang it, I can't speak solemnly. I'm going on my wedding trip in a month, man! When I helped Lornhamah through the rose window, and swarmed down the pillar, and she jumped into my arms eachunk, it settled everything. Ma obsequious, and Pa happily defunct. I'll tell you what, Louis, next to the sense of loving the Saviour, there's nothing nicer than to have a pretty girl cling round your neck on an occasion of fright, except, perhaps, skating with her by moon-light."

The next day brought Louis a fresh turn of fortune's wheel. He lingered after breakfast, with much trepidation, to present his friend's gift; and Mrs. Parish motioned him to a seat.

"He's a good boy," said she, looking pleased, "and means better than the raff of boarders. That is what I want to speak about."

The poor lady had replaced her white handkerchief by a black net cap, ornamented with large bows of time-browned crape, relics of mourning for Mr.

Eliezar Parish, twenty years deceased. She looked suspiciously red about the eyelids—her nose couldn't well show change.

"I'm going to give up lodgers," said she, in her usual dry tone. "It drained off all my extra money to keep Tom agoin', but he don't need it," here she choked a little, but went on in a moment crisp as ever. "I'll sell the house and go back East. Almiry Pettingil is my fust cousin, all the relation I've got left, an' I may's well jine stock with her. She mayn't like my pipe ; I learned to smoke to keep Tom company, but I couldn't never abear her gossipin' ways, so that's all even. I've property enough to support us both when the house is sold ; it's doubled in wuth a good many times sence I came here a young widow, and went to keepin' boarders in it." She smiled fondly as she paused to recall those days, when life held a little wider horizon than its present boundary of blue yarn knitting and market-basket.

"What I had to tell you," she continued, recovering herself grimly, "is just this ; I kinder hate to leave you shuckin' about here at this season, to be a prey to some shark of a boarding-house keeper. You never had no ability to take care of yourself, an' they'll skinch your eyeteeth afore you know it, besides harrowing your sympathies to hash over their former ownership of half the State. You'll pine under it ! Mollie is in Millville, I s'pose. Your position is sure here ; why not go back with me, and settle your affairs once for all. Besides, I don't understand this new fangled traveling ; I hain't left the city this ten year. You ain't ashamed to take care of me, as I know, and we can carry the parrot."

It was plain, his old friend had it all settled, "and

there was,” so Louis said, half trembling at the thoughts that would crowd up hot and fast from his starved heart, “no better way.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

“SNIPS AND SCISSORS.”

“And sang the Song of the Shirt.”



MISS PETINGIL'S heart was soft, as she sat one night, about a month after these occurrences, weaving thoughtfully to and fro in her low rocking-chair, enjoying her nearest approach to home comfort. She had in her ugly hands a tangle of hair-combings, from which she thoughtfully selected certain frosty threads, and laid them in an orderly skein on the bed ; for a dapper Italian had lately come to town, who made up switches for “e'en amost nothin'”, and Miss Petingil desired to have one. She was thinking, as she swung back and forth, of the time when her poor grizzled head had been crowned with a wealth of raven tresses, rippling far below her waist—her one beauty. That was long ago, before girlish curiosity had degenerated into gossip, and snuff replaced the companionship of friends, now moldering in the church-yard ; before her poor little heart-story had been felt and hardened into bitterness. Like many another in this world, there had been a day for her when life bloomed into a sudden luxuriance of promise so beautiful that when the barren blossom faded nothing left seemed of worth.

She had a relic of that time—a portrait of a man in an army coat and fierce black mustaches. Miss Petingil did not allude to him of her own accord, but she liked to feel at the bottom of her soul that she, the spare, awkward shoemaker's lass, had not been forgotten in the make-up of life's partners. Yes, if Captain Jack had lived, her lot had been different. To-night she felt a strange stirring at her heart-strings. She would go back out of this comfortless scrabble for mere existence, and remember her old love. She rose thoughtfully, and, taking the thin gray tress from the herring-bone quilt, unlocked the deep upper drawer of the antiquated red bureau, then drew out the whole receptacle and carried it to the window, for the light was fading fast. There lay her treasures—a few washed ribbons, a high back-comb, his gift, a bead-work bag, and, down out of sight in its box of dried lavender and rose leaves, the portrait.

Miss Petingil adjusted her spectacles on her sharp nose, grown sharper through years of thankless toil, and studied the florid countenance with fond regret. "So that was what become of him," said she, thoughtfully; "killed amongst the Injuns. Well, after forty years waitin', it's as good to know it as rest uncertain. But sometimes sence Knox told me, I've thought on-certainty better." Then, with a withered blush, she pressed her lips to the image, and, sighing, put it back in the box, so sadly fragrant, like her own sapless hopes.

There has been much poetry written about the blessings and beauty of maidenhood. But the old maid couldn't bear the poet. Poets sing for cultured, refined people. The forlorn multitude, whose burdens are the heavier exactly because they *are* common, seldom hear their lay.

Miss Petingil looked at the ugly old clock on the blue mantel. Only quarter past six. She would light the candle and read. True, the *Flag of Humanity* had been a financial failure, but it was there for perusal. On the whole, she wouldn't. It would be both wasting her eyes and the tallow. No knowing how soon either might give out, as it was. She'd sit in the dark. Eight o'clock. Her conscience was clear now. She put away the flat-irons she had been heating a-top the stove, and ambled off toward the hall, when there came a knock from some one at the front steps. Take courage. All life is not yet run to waste. *At the door stands some one who will help you gather its failing drops in a better goblet than you have dreamed of.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PEACE REIGNS.

“Three little mice were sitting to spin,
Pussy came by, and he looked in.”

“ TO PEACE.

“ Awake, sweet maid! see day's red greeting,
Come, view the world, new showered with dew;
The miracle of life repeating,
And isn't life enough for you ?

“ Come, dearest love, nor sit a dreaming,
Quick to your guests the door undo;
Their bright procession onward streaming,
With frolic, grace, and laughter beaming,
Is sure enough for you.

“ Up, up, poor maid, your tears be drying ;
 Want crowds the world, and hands are few ;
 Give toil, not tears; courage, not sighing ;
 What! isn’t work enough for you ?

“ Rest you, my dear, your toil be ceasing,
 With homely joys your strength renew ;
 Your days run short, and cares increasing,
 Isn’t success enough for you ?

“ Arise, sweet soul! These scenes be quitting,
 Pleasures were false, but pain was true ;
 Life’s cup is drained, and now be flitting,
 This world was not enough for you.”

“They shall rise up on wings as eagles.”



H ! how much easier does the male pilgrim
 find the road to Zion when he detects the
 rustle and violet perfume of well-known
 feminine garments just before him !

“ I liked her because she always tried to lead a fel-
 low in the right way,” said Amos Daley, hurrying to
 tell Mollie of his happiness.

And Mollie had staid to the wedding, and given the
 young couple a year’s rent of the Soloman Rodgers as
 a bridal present. Now they were merrily housekeep-
 ing, and their benefactress realized with a sigh, that,
 except her love, they needed her no more.

“ Othello’s occupation’s gone,” said she, surveying
 her pale, worn face in the mirror, as she made ready
 for their wedding one June morning. Its garden full
 of roses had made the old tavern gay ; fit to harmonize
 with Doppy’s heart. And when she brought Amos
 home, and installed him chief among her pets, he
 seemed quite the simplest and most delightful addition

she could have made to their number, and she wondered why she had not thought of it sooner.

But Peace, who honored the wedding with her presence, and a set of china, insisted that Mollie should carry her hollow cheeks back to Top Town, till she heard about the State's prison matronship, for which she had applied.

So it happened that there were more poetical studies with Mr. Pelican, who had lost all his front teeth, and mumbled a good deal, as he labored through Keats. Afternoon walks with sweet Mrs. Pelican were frequent, and attendance of evening prayer at the church with the western memorial window, where the teacher liked to stop on her way home from school. For Miss Pelican, perhaps, to wipe out consciousness of the confiscated marbles and jack-knives in her desk, had become very devout. There was not an item of the school life, from the order bell, to the last unhappy idler—dismissed after a half hour's lonely repentance—that she did not hate. The luckless brood obstinately preferred mumble-the-peg to arithmetic; called her Old Sharpy, and, it was rumored, wore five pairs of pants at once on Friday afternoons, looking forward to a near acquaintance with the Principal. Her cheek-bones and temper sharpened at once. She confided to Mollie that accidental meetings with children in the street made her flesh creep. And "Life's short," became her favorite exclamation. She took to singing "Long, long ago," in her peculiar method of perambulating among the quarter tones; and told her family she thought of adding to her repertoire, "My soul is dark," and "Love not." But, in spite of her disgust for it, Peace, having put her hand to the plough, never once looked back.

Francis Haythorne, who would not acknowledge

having sent the poetry, called directly Mollie arrived, at her request, and gradually found it convenient once more to spend his evenings in the Pelican library. He had made a good beginning in his Top Town practice, during the year, and was always busy. He was wont to inquire politely after Miss Pelican, at his first visits, and made it distinctly understood that Mollie was the object of his courtesy. But gradually matters fell into their old shape, as far as outward appearance went, and both were well pleased to have it so.

Whence it befell that Charley and Louis found the party assembled in the parlor at Gramercy place, to all appearance unchanged by the intervening years. There had been scant time for letters and explanations, and both young men preferred to wait and tell their story in person. Hence Charley's bride and Louis' adventures were equally surprises.

But Mollie received her own with no distrust, as he, having conquered himself, sought her with no misgiving. They had not been together a day before the years of misery were wiped out in recollection. They took up their happiness where it had ceased. They had laid it down at their parting in Millville, each to the untried future. Now of this new second future which they had won, experience and faithfulness had given them the key. They had entered the first in foreboding and dread; now they rejoiced in the second, knowing it to be their own.

Once only, as Louis watched his wife brushing back her brown hair, deeply streaked with silver, he came up, and, putting his hand on her forehead, said, "Mollie, have I done this?"

"Not you, but those frightful months of silence and uncertainty," she replied. "If you had only written, how much would have been saved us both."

“Mollie,” said he, after a moment’s reflection, “it seems a simple thing to write in a time of ill luck. But it is true that it is easier to undergo great suffering than to face the necessity of penning a letter. I *couldn’t* make up my mind. But while I was so miserable I always thought of you as safe and peaceful at home. I never saw you otherwise.” And so Mollie understood that he would never know what his happiness had cost her, and she loved him so dear that she was satisfied to have it so. We are always unknown to our best known, we find.

So it happened that on the last day before vacation all Peace’s friends assembled in her schoolroom to hear her scholars examined, and present her prizes. Never were worthy pupils so rewarded, or idlers so remorseful as to-day. Charley, Louis and Francis Haythorne had sent a huge basket of tops, velocipedes, pictures, books, kites and mechanical toys. And it further appeared that some one had lent a disinterested hand in preparing the public exercises, for among the pieces declaimed was the one prefixed to this chapter, and another, which brought a vivid color to the young teacher’s cheek ; the doctor, watching her, wondered whether from love or anger.

“ Gladiolus, Gladiolus, standing stately by the pathway,
With thy mantle red and flowing,
And thy gathered hood of crimson,
And thy sword in its green scabbard,
Swinging by its belt of orange ;
'Tis the empty scabbard hangs there,
For the sword is in my bosom.

“ Gladiolus, Gladiolus, have compassion on thy lover.
I am not a mighty huntsman
To course with thee through the forest ;
Not Endymion, with eagle

Wings, to fly to Venus' portals.
I am but a modest gardener ;
Thee I'll cherish in my cottage.

“ Gladiolus, Gladiolus, pity, sweet, my mortal sorrow.
Does no heart beat 'neath the crimson
Of that bodice, laced with yellow ?
Can thy lips, those rose cool petals,
Tremble never more with pity ?
Wilt thou dye thy ruddy vesture
In the life-blood of thy lover ?”

It was a sunny-faced little innocent, who had been coaxed into learning this two-edged apostrophe ; he was well rewarded by the malicious doctor in candy and peg-tops, but it was well for him that that afternoon began the long vacation.

When the school was at last dismissed, Mollie and Charley bore away together those tokens of sovereignty, the bell and the book, but the teacher lingered behind to close the room for the summer. It must have taken a long time, for presently the doctor, tired of waiting, stole quietly back. He found her as he expected, with her forehead pressed against her desk-lid, stormily regarding the dilapidated gauntlets, which she apparently kept by her, as convenient fuel for her wrath. Putting his hand over her shoulder, he quietly withdrew the symbols of opposition, and hid them once for all in his pocket. “ I own that you have won your side of our contest,” said he, with a gentleness that disarmed her anger. “ Every good scholar to-day has had a prize, we should take our turn. I have earned mine ; come, Peace, be my wife, and let us make life worth living to each other.”

“ You have laughed at me, tormented me this whole year,” cried she, not as refusing his suit, rather

as a child will argue with its father against his harsh decision. "Why have you done this? I wouldn't treat any one *I* loved so."

"You wouldn't, Peace?" The doctor pulled her averted face toward him, and looked manfully down into her wonderful black eyes—half yielding, half repellent. "Have you done anything but torment this whole year?"

"I—didn't think you cared," melting visibly. "You let me be miserable. You wrote that poem, as if you liked freedom best!"—a long pause, during which she scrutinized him intently. "But, Francis, if you really" her lashes drooped—"really cared, I'll make it up to you—indeed I will!"

So the demure doctor won his suit, and he wore his victory gracefully.

Mr. Growing celebrated the two weddings, a few weeks later, and bade them God-speed. He was a little grayer—a little sadder than when he had lost his suit at Mrs. McCross's nuptials; but he was strong enough to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and go his way sturdily.

Mr. and Mrs. Cymbalinus Adolphus Brown still live at Fir Covert; to all appearance, in perfect amity and happiness. But of that Mrs. Parish and Miss Petingil hold that there may be two opinions.

Poppy also resides in Millville. Her adopted mistress would not give her back; and there, in peace and plenty, she is rapidly attaining a blasphemous old age.

THE END.

